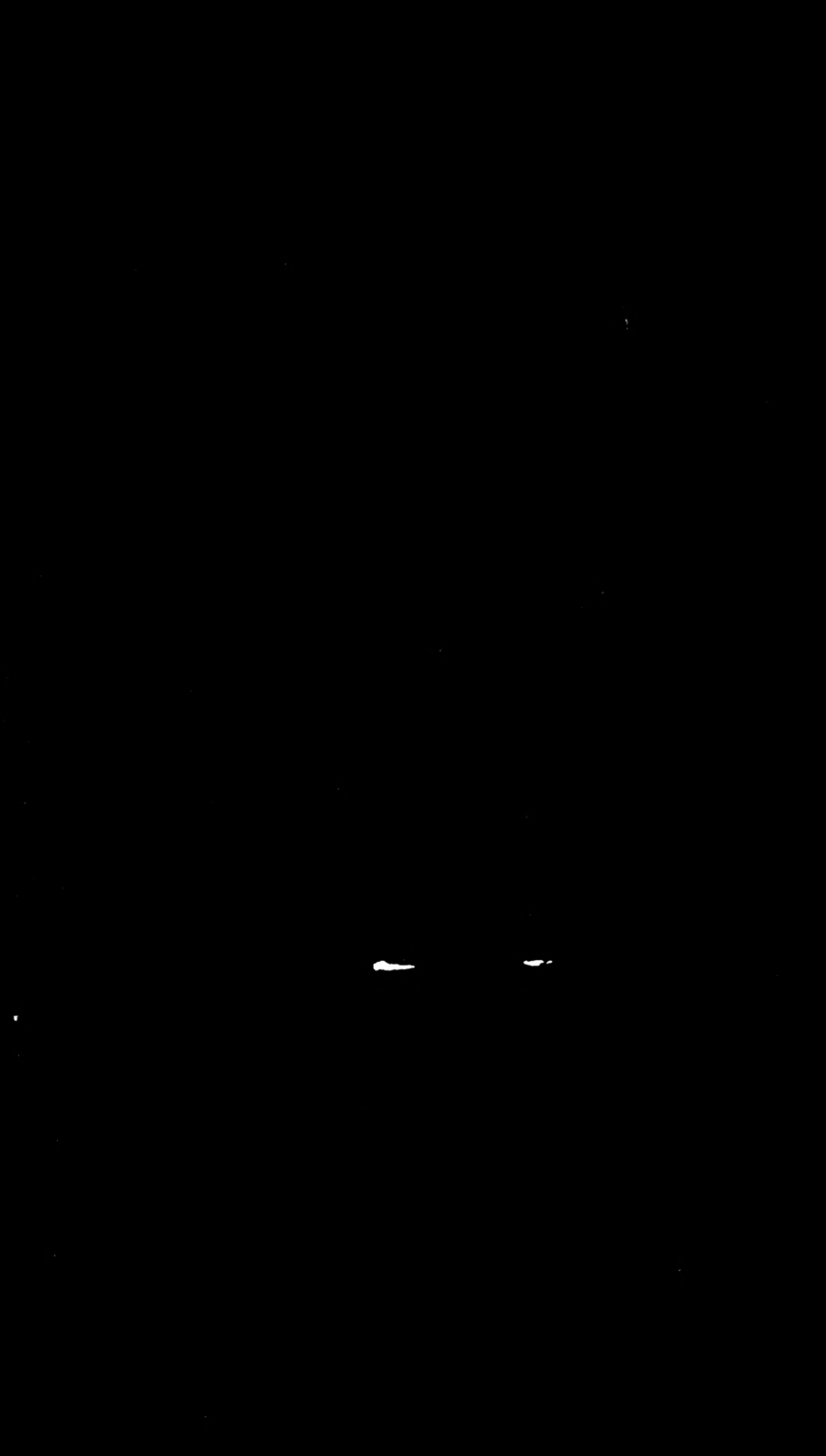




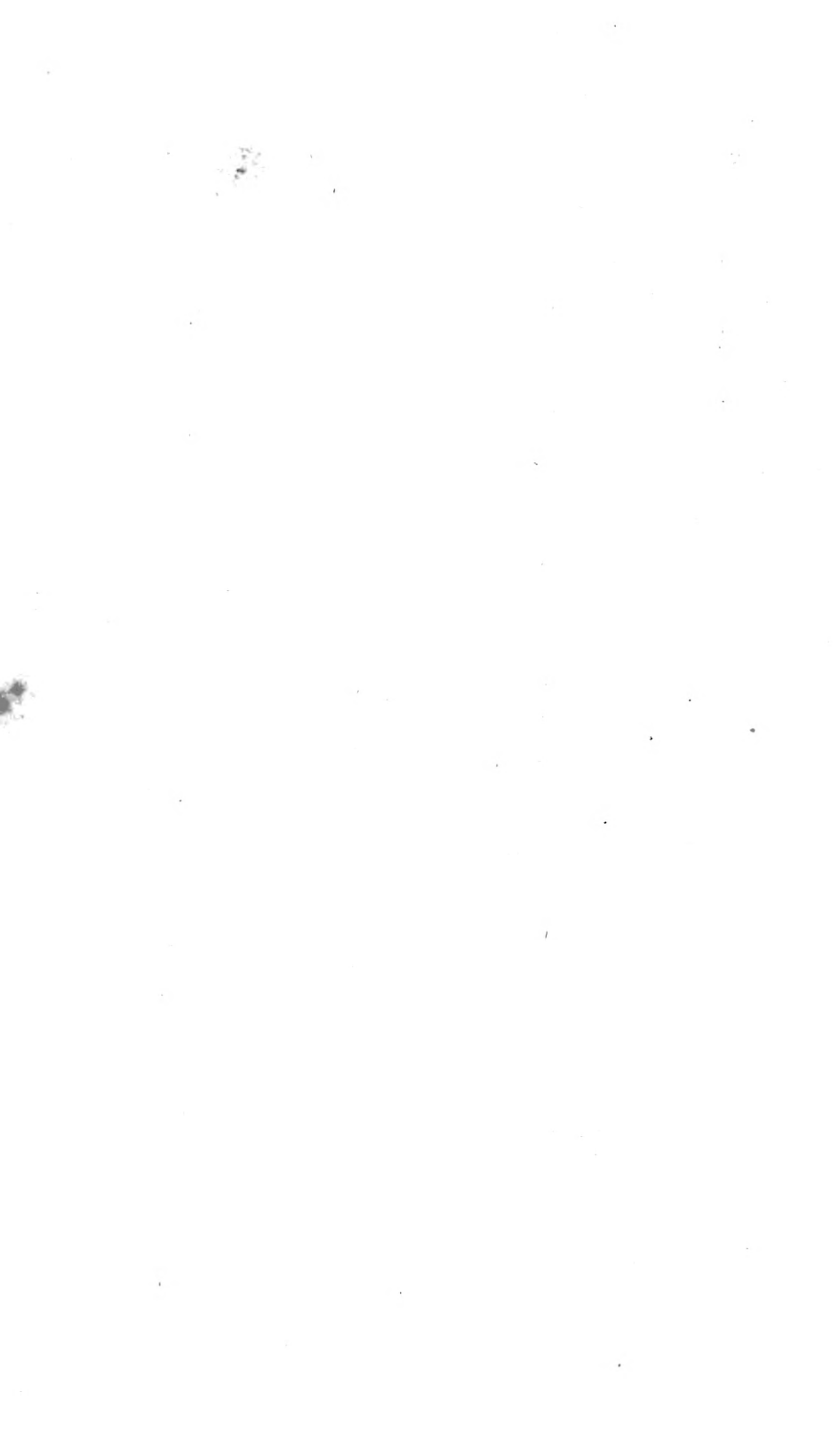


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THE ADVENTURES OF GIL BLAS
OF SANTILLANA.







THE ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF SANTILLANA

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH
BY HENRI VAN LAUN

WITH AN
INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, LIFE OF LESAGE, AND NOTES



VOLUME SECOND

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CHAPTER I.

GIL BLAS, UNABLE TO ACCOMMODATE HIMSELF TO THE MORALS OF THE ACTRESSES, QUILTS THE SERVICE OF ARSENIA, AND FINDS A PLACE WITH A MORE RESPECTABLE FAMILY.

A REMNANT of honour and religion, which I had preserved amidst this moral corruption, made me resolve not only to leave Arsenia, but even to break off all intercourse with Laura, whom, however, I could not cease to love, though I knew that she was often unfaithful to me. Happy is the man who can thus profit by those rational moments which interrupt the pleasures that engross him! One fine morning I packed up my things; and without settling with Arsenia, who in fact scarcely owed me anything, without taking leave of my dear Laura, I left the house wherein I only breathed an atmosphere of vice. I had no sooner done this good deed than Heaven rewarded me for it. I met the steward of my late master Don Mathias, and bowed to him. He recognised me, and stopped to enquire in whose service I was. I replied that I was just out of a situation, that after living for about a month with Arsenia,

whose morals did not suit me, I had suddenly left her of my own free will, in order to preserve my innocence. The steward, as though he felt any scruples himself, commended my delicacy of feeling, and said that he would procure me a very good place, since I was such an honourable young fellow. He fulfilled his promise, and took me that very day to Don Vincent de Guzman's house, whose man of business he knew.

I could not have entered a better service; nor did I ever repent of having gone there. Don Vincent was a very rich old nobleman, who had lived for several years without a lawsuit or a wife; the physicians having removed the latter, in their attempts to rid her of a cough which might have lasted for years if she had not taken their remedies. Instead of thinking of a second marriage he had entirely devoted himself to the education of his only daughter, Aurora, who was then entering her twenty-sixth year. To an uncommon beauty she added a fine and cultivated intelligence. Her father, though no genius, had a talent for managing his affairs well. He had one fault which is excusable in old men; he liked to talk, and that chiefly of war and combats. If anyone unluckily touched on these subjects in his presence, he straightway blew the trumpet of his heroism, and his hearers were only too

happy if they escaped with the narrative of two sieges and three battles. As he had spent two-thirds of his life in the army, his memory was an inexhaustible source of anecdotes, which were not always listened to with as much pleasure as they were related. As, moreover, he stammered, and was very prolix, he was not the most agreeable of narrators. In all other respects I never met with a nobleman of a more amiable character. His temper was always the same, and he was neither obstinate nor capricious, which I admired in a man of quality. Though he was careful in his expenses, he kept a liberal establishment. His household consisted of several men-servants and three women in waiting on Aurora. I soon discovered that the steward of Don Mathias had procured me a good place, and my only anxiety was how to keep it. I set myself to reconnoitre the ground under my feet; to study the characters of the whole household, and then, regulating my conduct accordingly, I was not long in gaining the good-will of my master and of all the servants.

I had been above a month in Don Vincent's service when I thought I perceived that his daughter took more notice of me than of the other servants in the house. Whenever her eyes met mine I seemed to observe a sort of pleasure in her looks, which I did not remark when she let them fall on the others. If I

had not lived among young men of fashion and actors it would never have entered into my head that Aurora was thinking about me; but I had been somewhat spoiled amongst these gentry, amongst whom even the reputation of ladies of the highest rank is not always held sacred. "If some of those mummers are to be believed," I said, "ladies of quality sometimes take whims which they turn to account. How do I know that my mistress may not have those whims too? But no," I added, a moment after, "I cannot believe it. She is not one of those Messalinas who, belying their pride of birth, unworthily cast their glances on those beneath them, and dishonour themselves without a blush. She is rather one of those virtuous but tender-hearted girls who, satisfied with the limits in which virtue confines their inclinations, feel no scruple in inspiring as well as entertaining a refined passion which amuses them without being dangerous."

It was thus I judged of my mistress, without exactly knowing what to conclude. Meanwhile, whenever she met me, she always smiled and seemed pleased. Any man might be deceived by such flattering appearances without being thought a coxcomb; and, for my part, I could not resist them. I thought Aurora was deeply smitten with my merits, and regarded myself as one of those favoured attendants to whom love makes servitude

sweet.¹ To appear in some measure less unworthy of the happiness which my good fortune seemed to assure me, I began to take more pains about my personal appearance than I had hitherto done. I made it my business to discover what made me look better. I spent all the money I had in linen, pomades, and scents. The first thing I did in the morning was to dress and perfume myself, that I might not appear slovenly if sent for by my mistress. With these attentions to personal appearance, and the other efforts I made to please, I flattered myself that the moment of my bliss was drawing near.

Amongst Aurora's women there was one named Ortiz. She was an old creature who had lived more than twenty years in Don Vincent's house, had brought up his daughter, and still served her as a duenna; but she no longer performed the most difficult of her duties. On the contrary, instead of reporting whatever Aurora did, as she formerly used to do, she now only occupied herself in concealing them; and, in a word, enjoyed the entire confidence of her mistress. One evening dame Ortiz, having found an opportunity of speaking to me without the chance of our being overheard, said to me in a low voice that, if I were

¹ Jean Jacques Rousseau in the first book of his *Confessions*, mentions his having entertained similar feelings for the Countess de Solar when he poured her out some water.

discreet and prudent, I had only to be in the garden at midnight, and that there would be told me some things which I should not be sorry to hear. I replied to the duenna, squeezing her hand, that I would not fail to be there ; and we quickly separated through fear of being surprised. I had no doubt that I had made a tender impression on the heart of Don Vincent's daughter, and I had no little difficulty in restraining my joy. How the time hung on my hands from this moment till supper, though we supped early ; and from supper till my master went to bed ! How terribly slow the moments dragged on in the house that night ! To add to my vexation, when Don Vincent had retired to his room, instead of going to sleep, he began to fight over again his campaigns in Portugal, which he had so often dinned into my ears already. But a thing which he had not done hitherto, and which was reserved for that very evening, was to enumerate all the officers who had distinguished themselves in his time, and even to relate their exploits. What did I not suffer before he was done ! However at last he left off speaking, and went to sleep. I hastened at once into the little room where I slept, and from which there was a way into the garden by a private staircase. I perfumed myself all over, put on a clean shirt, after having scented it thoroughly ; and, forgetting nothing of what I thought might con-

tribute to encourage the passion of my mistress, I went to the place of assignation.

Ortiz was not there. I concluded that, tired of waiting for me, she had returned to her room, and that the happy moment was gone. I blamed Don Vincent for this; but as I was cursing his campaigns, I heard ten o'clock strike. I thought the clock was wrong, and that it could not be less than one in the morning. However, I was so far out that full a quarter of an hour later, I heard another clock strike ten again. "All right!" I said to myself; "I have only two entire hours to dance attendance here.¹ At all events they shall not complain of my want of punctuality. What shall I do with myself till midnight? I had better take a walk in the garden, and think of the part I am to play, which is quite new to me. I am not yet accustomed to the whims of women of rank, though I know how to behave to shop-girls and actresses. You accost them familiarly, and you come to the point without ceremony; but very different manners are needed with a lady of position. It seems to me that in such a case the gallant must be polite, complaisant, tender and respectful, yet without being bashful;

¹ In the original *garder le mulet*, to keep the mule, because the servant took care of the mules or horses while his master was otherwise engaged. The Countess d'Aulnoy says in the twelfth letter of her *Relation: Pendant que les cavaliers sont avec leurs maîtresses les laquais gardent leurs chevaux à quelque distance de la maison*.

and that, instead of wishing to hasten his happiness by his eagerness, he must expect it from a moment of weakness."

Thus I reasoned, and thus I proposed to act with Aurora. I fancied that in a little while I should have the joy of being at the feet of this lovely lady, pouring forth a torrent of impassioned sayings. I even recalled all the passages in our stock-plays which might be useful to me in our interview, and do me credit. I flattered myself that I should bring them in well, and hoped that, like certain actors of my acquaintance, I too should owe my wit to my memory. While engrossed by these thoughts, which to me were a pleasanter distraction than the martial stories of my master, I heard eleven o'clock strike. "All right!" I exclaimed, "I have only sixty minutes more to wait; so let me arm myself with patience." This gave me some encouragement, and I plunged again into a reverie, sometimes sauntering up and down, at other times seating myself in an arbour at the further end of the garden. At length, midnight, the hour that I had been so long waiting for, struck. A few moments later, Ortiz, as punctual as myself, but less impatient, made her appearance. "Señor Gil Blas," she said, accosting me, "how long have you been here?" "Two hours," I answered. "Indeed," she replied, loudly laughing at me, "of a truth you are very punctual; it is a pleasure to make

a nocturnal assignation with you. Really," she added, seriously, "you cannot buy too dearly the good fortune of which I am the messenger. My mistress desires to have some private conversation with you, and she has bidden me take you to her room, where she awaits you. I will say no more; for you must learn the secret from no lips but her own. Follow me; I will show you to her apartment." With these words the duenna took me by the hand, and led me mysteriously to her mistress's room, through a little door of which she had the key.

CHAPTER II.

AURORA'S RECEPTION OF GIL BLAS, AND THEIR CONVERSATION.

I FOUND Aurora in dishabille; and this pleased me. I bowed to her very respectfully, and with as much elegance as I was capable of. She received me smiling, and insisted upon my sitting down by her. Then to complete my delight, she told her messenger to go into another room and leave us alone. After that, addressing herself to me, she said:—"Gil Blas, you must have perceived how favourably I regard you, and how I distinguish you from

all the other servants of my father; if my looks had not told you that I am well disposed towards you, the step I have taken to-night cannot leave you room to doubt it."

I did not give her time to say anything more; I thought that, as a gentleman, I ought to spare her modesty the pain of explaining herself more distinctly. I rose with transport; and casting myself at Aurora's feet, like a stage hero falling at the knees of his mistress, I exclaimed in a theatrical tone: "Ah, madam, have I heard aright? Is it to me these words are addressed? Is it possible that Gil Blas, hitherto the sport of fortune, and the outcast of nature, has had the happiness of inspiring sentiments" "Do not speak so loud!" my mistress broke in, with a laugh, "you will wake my women, who sleep in the next room. Get up again, resume your seat, and hear me out without interrupting me. Yes, Gil Blas," she continued, resuming her gravity, "I wish you well, and as a proof of my esteem, I am going to entrust you with a secret on which the peace of my life depends. I love a handsome young gentleman, of comely appearance, and of illustrious birth. His name is Don Lewis Pacheco. I see him occasionally in the public walks and at the theatre, but I have never spoken to him; I do not even know what his private character may be, or whether he has any bad qualities. This, however, is what I wish to learn. I need

a person who will carefully enquire into his morals and manners, and give me a faithful account of them. I choose you in preference to all our other servants; and think I risk nothing in entrusting you with this commission. I hope you will discharge it cleverly and discreetly, and that I shall never repent of having taken you into my confidence."

Here my mistress stopped for my reply. I was at first disconcerted by my having made such an unpleasant mistake; but I soon recovered myself, and getting over the confusion always caused by unlucky rashness, I expressed so much zeal for the lady's interests, and such ardent devotion for her service that, if I did not efface from her mind the foolish idea I had flattered myself with, of having pleased her, I showed at all events that I knew well how to make amends for my folly. I only asked two days to bring her an account of Don Lewis. After this, Dame Ortiz, whom her mistress called, showed me the way back into the garden; and as she quitted me said with a mocking air: "Good night, Gil Blas, I need not recommend you to be early at the next interview, for I know your punctuality too well to have any anxiety on that account."

I returned to my room, not without some vexation at finding my expectations deceived. Nevertheless, I was sensible enough to console myself; and to reflect that it was better for me

to be the confidant of my mistress than her lover. I even thought that this might turn out to my advantage, for the messengers of love are generally well paid for their trouble; and I went to bed fully resolved to do whatever Aurora required of me. I went out next day for this purpose. There was no difficulty in learning where a gentleman so well-known as Don Lewis dwelt. I enquired about him in the neighbourhood; but the person to whom I addressed myself could not do much to satisfy my curiosity; and this obliged me to begin my inquiries over again next day, when I was more successful. I chanced to meet in the street a young man of my acquaintance, and we stopped for a little gossip together. At the same moment one of his friends came by, who addressed us, and told us that he had just been dismissed by Don Joseph Pacheco, Don Lewis's father, accused of having drunk an octave cask of wine belonging to his master. I did not lose such a good opportunity of learning all that I wished to know; and plied my questions so successfully, that I returned home well pleased in being able to keep my word to my mistress. I was to see her again the next night at the same hour and in the same manner as the first time. I was not so anxious this evening, and far from listening with impatience to the talk of my old master I introduced the subject of his campaigns myself; I waited for midnight with the greatest possible tranquillity;

and it was not until I had heard it strike on any number of clocks that I went down into the garden, without anointing and perfuming myself, amending my ways in this as in other respects.

I found the trusty duenna at the place of appointment, and she satirically reproached me with relaxing my diligence. I made her no reply, and allowed her to conduct me to Aurora's apartment, who, as soon as I made my appearance, asked me if I had obtained much information about Don Lewis. "Yes, madam," said I; "I am able to satisfy your curiosity. First of all, he is on the point of returning to Salamanca to complete his studies. From what I have heard, he is a young gentleman of honour and probity. As for his courage, he cannot be deficient in that, being a nobleman and a Castilian. Moreover, he is very intelligent, and has very pleasant manners; but what may be hardly to your liking, though I cannot omit to inform you of it, he is pretty much like other young noblemen; he is a terrible rake. I am compelled to tell you that, young as he is, he has already had two actresses under his protection." "Is it possible?" replied Aurora. "What shocking conduct! But are you quite sure, Gil Blas, that he leads such a dissolute life?" "I have no doubt of it, madam," I replied. "A servant, dismissed from his house this morning, told me so; and servants are sincere when they talk of their masters' fail-

ings. Besides, he visits Don Alexo Segiar, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernand de Gamboa; this alone is enough to prove that he is a rake.” “That will do, Gil Blas,” said my mistress with a sigh; “after your report I must conquer my unworthy affection. Though it is already deeply rooted in my heart, I do not despair of tearing it out. “Here,” she added, slipping a little purse, and not an empty one, into my hands, “take this for your trouble. Beware of betraying my secret; remember that I rely on your silence.”

I assured my mistress that I was the Harpocrates¹ of confidential servants, and that she might be perfectly easy on that score. After giving this assurance I went away, very impatient to find out what there was in the purse. There were twenty pistoles in it. It struck me all at once that Aurora would doubtless have given me more had I brought her pleasant news, since she paid so handsomely for what was disappointing. I was sorry not to have imitated the example of the lawyers, who sometimes colour the truth in their reports. It was a pity to have destroyed, in its infancy, an intrigue which might have become very advantageous to me in its later stages, if I had not foolishly made a point of being sincere. Nevertheless, I had the consolation of being indemnified for the expense I had incurred so very uselessly in perfumery and washes.

¹ Harpocrates was the God of Silence.

CHAPTER III.

A GREAT CHANGE AT DON VINCENT'S, AND THE
STRANGE RESOLUTION WITH WHICH LOVE
INSPIRED THE FAIR AURORA.

It happened, soon after this adventure, that Don Vincent fell ill. Even though he had not been very old, the symptoms of his malady were so acute that a fatal issue was to be feared. At the beginning of his illness they called in two of the most famous physicians of Madrid. One was doctor Andros,¹ the other, doctor Oquetos.² They carefully examined the patient, and, after a strict investigation, were both of opinion that the humours of his body were in a state of fermentation; but that was the only point on which they were agreed. One wanted to purge him forthwith, and the other to put off the purging. "We must at once get rid of the humours," said Andros, "though they are crude, whilst they are in this violent agitation of ebb and flow, lest they should settle on some vital part."

¹ By Andros is meant Dr Andry, dean of the faculty of medicine of Paris, who died in 1742, and was the author of many works on medicine, bleeding, food during Lent, &c.

² Oquetos stands for Philippe Hecquet (see vol. i., book ii., ch. 2, p. 130, note), whom Lesage had already satirised as Dr Sangrado. Llorente believes that this name is derived from the Greek *ὄχετος*, a drain or canal.

Oquetos, on the other hand, maintained that they ought to wait for the development of the humours before using purgatives. "But your method," said the first, "is directly opposed to the rules laid down by the prince of medicine. Hippocrates recommends purgation in the most violent fever, from the very first attack, and says distinctly that you must make haste to purge whilst the humours are in orgasm, that is, in fermentation." "Ay! there is your mistake," replied Oquetos. "Hippocrates does not mean fermentation by the word orgasm; he rather implies the concoction of the humours."¹

Thereupon our doctors grew warm. One brought out the Greek text, and quoted all the authors who had explained it as he did; the other, relying on a Latin translation, took up a still higher tone about it. Which of the two was to be believed? Don Vincent was not the man to decide that question. Meanwhile, seeing that he must choose, he gave his confidence to the physician who had despatched the larger number of patients, I mean the elder. So Andros, who was the younger, went away, not without launching some jeering remarks at his senior on the interpretation of the word "orgasm." Oquetos, therefore, was triumphant. Being of the school of Dr Sangrado, he began

¹ A very lively controversy took place between Andry and Hecquet, on the right meaning of the word "orgasm." Many works were written on both sides of the question.

by copiously bleeding his patient, deferring the purging until the humours should be concocted ; but death, doubtless fearing lest a purgation so wisely delayed might rob him of his prey, anticipated the concoction, and carried my master off. Such was the end of Don Vincent, who lost his life because his physician did not understand Greek.

Aurora, after giving her father a funeral worthy of a man of his rank, took possession of his estate. Having thus become her own mistress, she dismissed a few of the servants, giving them gratuities in proportion to their services, and soon afterwards retired to a castle which belonged to her, on the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon and Buendia. I was among the number of those whom she retained, and who followed her into the country ; I had even the good fortune to become necessary to her. Notwithstanding the faithful report I had given her of Don Lewis, she still loved that gentleman ; or rather, having failed to conquer her affection, she completely abandoned herself to it. There was no longer any need for her to be circumspect in order to speak to me in private. "Gil Blas," she said one day, sighing, "I cannot forget Don Lewis. Whatever efforts I make to banish him from my thoughts, he is ever recurring to them, not as you have described him, plunged in every excess, but as I should wish him to be, tender, loving,

constant.” She betrayed great emotion in uttering these words, and could not help shedding tears. I nearly wept also, I was so affected from mere sympathy. I could not have paid court better than by appearing touched at her trouble. “My friend,” she went on, after drying her lovely eyes, “I see that you have a very tender disposition, and I am so pleased by your zeal that I promise you to reward it well. Your assistance, my dear Gil Blas, is more necessary to me than ever. I shall disclose to you a plan that engrosses all my thoughts; though you will think it very eccentric. It is this. I intend to start as soon as possible for Salamanca. There I mean to disguise myself as a gentleman, and get acquainted with Pacheco, under the name of Don Felix. I shall try to win his confidence and friendship; and often mention to him Aurora de Guzman, whose cousin I shall pretend to be. He will probably wish to see her; and that is what I look forward to. We shall have two different apartments in Salamanca; in the one I shall pass as Don Felix, in the other as Aurora; and thus, by appearing before Don Lewis sometimes as a man, sometimes in the dress of my own sex, I flatter myself gradually to accomplish my purpose. I am perfectly well aware,” she continued, “that my plan is absurd; but my passion hurries me along, and the innocence of my

intentions makes me careless of the course I mean to venture upon."

I was much of the same mind as Aurora in regard to her scheme, which seemed to me a mad one. But, however unreasonable I thought it, I took care not to assume the pedagogue. On the contrary I began to gild the pill, and undertook to prove that this insane project was nothing more than a pleasant frolic without any serious consequences. I do no longer remember what I said to establish this; but she yielded to my representations, for lovers like to have their most foolish fancies flattered. We therefore only looked on this rash enterprise as a play, of which the characters were to be duly cast. The actors were chosen from among our own household; and then we distributed the parts, which was done without noise or quarrels; but then we were not professional actors. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should personate Aurora's aunt, under the name of Donna Ximena de Guzman, and be attended by a manservant and a maid; and that Aurora, dressed as a gentleman, was to have me for her servant, with one of her maids disguised as a page, to wait upon her in her own room. The parts thus arranged, we returned to Madrid, where we heard that Don Lewis was still, though he would soon leave for Salamanca. We ordered the necessary dresses to be made as quickly as

possible. When they were finished my mistress had them quickly packed up, for we were only to put them on at the proper place and time ; then, leaving her house in the charge of her steward, she began her journey in a carriage drawn by four mules, and travelled towards the kingdom of Leon, with such of her servants as were to play parts in this comedy.

We had already crossed Old Castile when the axle-tree of the carriage broke. The accident happened between Avila and Villafior, three or four hundred yards from a castle which we perceived at the foot of a mountain. As night was coming on, we were much embarrassed. But a countryman chanced to pass, who relieved us of our anxiety without much trouble to himself. He told us that the castle we saw belonged to Donna Elvira, the widow of Don Pedro de Pinares, and praised this lady so highly that my mistress sent me to the castle to ask, on her behalf, for a night's lodgings. Elvira did not belie the countryman's favourable report ; but it must be said that I fulfilled my mission in such a manner as would have induced her to admit us, even if she had not been the most polite woman in the world. She received me most courteously, and returned a favourable answer to my compliment. Thereupon we all went to the castle, to which the mules drew the carriage very slowly. At the gate we met the widow of Don Pedro, who

came out to meet my mistress. I shall pass over the speeches which civility dictated on this occasion, merely observing that Elvira was a lady advanced in years who knew better than any woman in the world how to discharge the duties of hospitality. She led Aurora into a splendid apartment, and, leaving her to rest herself for a while, she gave her personal attention to the most minute things which concerned our comfort. Afterwards, when supper was ready, she ordered it to be served in Aurora's room, where they sat down to table together. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those ladies who cast a slur on their hospitalities by their pensive or discontented looks. She was cheerful, and kept up a pleasant conversation, whilst she expressed herself with dignity and elegance; I admired her intelligence, and the delicate turn of her thoughts, and Aurora seemed as much pleased as myself. They became sworn friends, and mutually promised to correspond with each other. As our carriage could not be repaired until the next day, and we should have had to set out very late, it was decided that we should stay at the castle another night. Myself and the other servants were amply provided for, and our beds were no worse than our board.

On the following day my mistress found fresh charms in Elvira's conversation. They dined in a large hall containing several pictures. One

among the rest, in which the figures were marvellously well painted, attracted notice, but its subject was highly tragic, and represented a gentleman, lying on his back, and weltering in his blood; and though dead, he seemed to menace you still. Near him was to be seen a young lady in a different attitude, though she too was stretched on the ground. A sword was plunged in her breast, and she was breathing her last sigh, at the same time gazing with her dying eyes on a young man who seemed to be in extreme grief at losing her. The painter had also introduced another figure, which did not escape my notice. It was a handsome old man, who, deeply moved by the sight before him, appeared to feel it as deeply as the youth. It might be said that this horrible spectacle produced the same pangs in both of them, but that the impressions received were different. The old man seemed to be overwhelmed by the deep sadness into which he was plunged, whilst rage was mingled with the young man's affliction. All these circumstances were depicted so vividly that we could not take our eyes from it. My mistress inquired what was the subject of the picture. "Madam," Donna Elvira said to her, "it is a faithful representation of the misfortunes of my family." This answer excited Aurora's curiosity, and she betrayed so great a desire to learn the particulars that the widow of Don Pedro could not

but promise to gratify it. This promise, made before Ortiz, her two fellow-servants, and myself, detained us all in the room when the meal was over. My mistress was going to send us away, but Donna Elvira, who saw that we were dying with eagerness to hear the story of the picture, kindly bade us stay, alleging at the same time that the history she was about to relate did not need to be kept secret. Immediately afterwards she began her tale in these words.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FATAL MARRIAGE.—A TALE.¹

ROGER, King of Sicily had a brother and a sister. The brother, named Mainfroy, rebelled against him, and stirred up a sanguinary civil war. But unfortunately for him, after losing two battles, he fell into the hands of the king, who was content to deprive him of his liberty as a punishment for his revolt. This clemency only earned for Roger the character of a barbarian in the minds of certain of his subjects. They

¹ This tale, founded on truth, is the groundwork of Thomson's tragedy of *Tancred and Sigismunda*, also imitated by the French dramatist Saurin, and brought upon the stage, under the name of *Blanche et Guiscard*. Lesage borrowed it from Francisco de Roxas' play *Casarse por Vengarse*.

said he had only spared his brother's life in order to wreak on him a protracted and inhuman vengeance. People in general, on better grounds, imputed the harsh treatment which Mainfroy suffered in prison, to his sister Matilda alone. This princess had in fact always hated the prince, and did not cease to persecute him as long as he lived. She died soon after him, and her death was regarded as a just punishment for her unnatural feelings.

Mainfroy left two sons, still in their infancy. Roger had a mind to get rid of them, lest, when they grew up, the desire of avenging their father should cause them to revive a faction which was not so thoroughly overthrown but that it might occasion fresh troubles to the State. He mentioned his design to the Senator Leontio Siffredi, his minister, who did not approve of it, and who, to divert him from his intention, undertook the education of Prince Henriquez, the elder, and advised him to entrust the younger, whose name was Pedro, to the Constable of Sicily. Roger, persuaded that his nephews would be trained by these two men in principles of due submission, gave them into their hands, and himself took charge of his niece Constantia, who was of the same age as Henriquez, and the only daughter of the Princess Matilda. He provided her with female attendants and all kinds of masters, and spared nothing on her education.

Leontio Siffredi had a castle hardly two leagues from Palermo, at a place named Belmonte. It was here that this minister devoted himself to making Henriquez worthy of ascending at some future time the throne of Sicily. He soon observed in the young prince qualities so amiable that his attachment became as strong as if he had not himself been a father of a family. He had, however, two daughters. The eldest, named Blanche, a year younger than the prince, was endowed with perfect beauty ; and the younger named Portia, whose birth had caused her mother's death, was still in her cradle. Blanche and Prince Henriquez loved each other as soon as they were capable of loving, though they had no opportunity of conversing in private. But in the course of time, the prince found means to converse with her occasionally ; indeed, he made such a good use of these precious moments that he prevailed with Siffredi's daughter to acquiesce in a certain design which he contemplated. It happened at this time that Leontio was ordered by the king to make a journey through one of the most remote provinces in the island. During his absence Henriquez caused an opening to be made in the wall of his own room which was next to Blanche's apartment. This aperture was concealed by a sliding wooden panel, which opened and closed imperceptibly, being fitted so tightly to the wainscot that no one

could have discovered the contrivance. A skilful mechanic, whom the prince had won over, performed this work diligently and secretly.

By this means the enamoured Henriquez introduced himself now and then into his mistress's room; but he never took advantage of her kindness. If she had been imprudent to permit him to enter her room in privacy, it had only been on the express assurance that he would never request anything but the most innocent favours. One night he found her in a state of great anxiety. She had been informed that the king was very ill, and that he had sent for Siffredi, as high chancellor of the kingdom, to put into his hands his last will and testament. She represented to herself her dear Henriquez as already on the throne; and the fear of losing him, when in this lofty station, strangely affected her mind. Indeed she was weeping when he made his appearance. "Madam," he said, "you are weeping; may I know the cause of the grief which seems to overwhelm you?" "My lord," replied Blanche, "I cannot conceal my fears from you. Your uncle, the king, is at the point of death, and you will succeed him. When I reflect how far your approaching greatness will remove you from me, I will own to you that my mind mis-gives me. A monarch sees things differently from a lover; and what was the centre of the

latter's desires when he recognised a power greater than his own, affects him but slightly when he is on the throne. Be it presentiment or reason, my soul is agitated by emotions which all my confidence in your kindness cannot repress. I do not distrust the strength of your feelings ; I only distrust my own happy fate."

"Adorable Blanche," replied the prince, "your fears are flattering, and warrant my devotion to your charms ; but the excess of your distrust wrongs my love, and, if I may venture to say it, the esteem to which I am entitled. Never think that my fate could ever be sundered from yours ; nay believe that you alone will always constitute my joy and my happiness. Away then with these vain alarms. Why should they trouble moments so sweet as these?"

"Ah, my lord," replied the daughter of Leontio, "as soon as the crown is placed on your head, your subjects may demand from you to give them a queen descended from a long line of kings, whose brilliant alliance might add new realms to your own. Perhaps, alas ! you will fulfil their expectations, even at the cost of your dearest inclinations."

"Why," exclaimed Henriquez, with warmth, "why are you so ready to torment yourself, and to picture the future so full of grief ? If Heaven removes the king, my uncle, and makes me sovereign of Sicily, I swear to marry you at Palermo, before my whole court ; and I invoke all that

is held most sacred amongst men to confirm my oath."

The protestations of Henriquez somewhat reassured the daughter of Siffredi. The rest of their conversation turned upon the illness of the king. Henriquez displayed the goodness of his heart, by pitying the condition of his uncle, though there was no reason why he should be greatly affected by it; but the ties of blood made him regret a king, when death held out the prospect of a crown to him. Blanche did not yet know all the misfortunes which threatened her. The Constable of Sicily, who had met her coming out of her father's room one day when he was at Belmonte on some important business, had been smitten by her beauty. The very next day he had asked her in marriage of her father, who gave his consent; but Roger's illness then came on, the marriage was deferred, and Blanche had not even heard of it.

One morning, as Henriquez had just finished dressing, he was surprised to see Leontio enter his room, followed by Blanche. "My lord," said the minister, "the news I have to communicate to you will afflict you; but there are some consoling circumstances attending it which should moderate your sorrow. The king your uncle has just died; and by his death he leaves you heir to his throne. Sicily is now subject to your sway; the nobility of

the realm await your orders at Palermo; they have commissioned me to receive them from your mouth; and I come, my liege, with my daughter, to offer you the earliest and most sincere homage which your new subjects owe to you." The prince, who knew that Roger had been for two months suffering from a complaint which was gradually killing him, was not astonished by the information. Impressed, however, by the sudden change of his condition, he felt a thousand confused emotions rise up in his breast. He stood musing for some time, and then, breaking silence, he addressed Leontio as follows: "Wise Siffredi, I shall look upon you always as my father; I shall take pride in comporting myself according to your advice, and you shall reign in Sicily more fully than I." With these words, he approached a table on which there were writing materials, and taking a blank sheet of paper, wrote his name at the bottom of the page. "What are you doing, Sire?" asked Siffredi. "I attest my gratitude and my esteem for you," answered Henriquez. Then, presenting the paper to Blanche, he said to her: "Madam, accept this pledge of my faith, and of the empire with which I invest you over my inclinations." Blanche took it, blushing, and made him this reply: "Sire, I receive with respect the favours of my king; but I am under the authority of a father, and I trust that you will permit me to

place this paper in his hands, to make use of it as his prudence may suggest."

She accordingly gave Henriquez's sign-manual to her father. Siffredi at once perceived what had hitherto escaped his penetration; he divined the prince's feelings, and said to him: "Your Majesty shall have no reproach to make to me; I shall not abuse the confidence" "My dear Leontio," interrupted Henriquez, "have no fear of abusing it. Whatever use you may make of my signature I shall approve. But go," he continued, "return to Palermo, order preparations to be made for my coronation, and tell my subjects that I shall follow you immediately, to receive their oaths of allegiance, and to assure them of my affection." The minister obeyed the commands of his new sovereign, and set out for Palermo with his daughter.

A few hours after their departure the prince also left Belmonte, more intent on his love than the high rank to which he was about to attain. As soon as he was seen approaching the town, the air was rent with a thousand cries of joy; and amid the acclamations of the people he entered his palace, where everything was ready for the ceremony. Here he found the princess Constantia, in deep mourning robes. She seemed to be greatly affected by Roger's death. They expressed to each other their compliments of condolence on the death

of the monarch in a becoming manner, though Henriquez was somewhat colder than Constantia, who, in spite of the family differences, had been unable to hate the prince. Henriquez then ascended the throne, and the princess seated herself at his side, in a chair a little less raised. The nobles of the kingdom took up their respective positions, each according to his rank. The ceremony began; and Leontio, as lord High Chancellor of the Kingdom, and keeper of the late king's will, opened it, and read it in a loud voice. This document stated in substance that Roger, being without issue, appointed as his successor the eldest son of Mainfroy, on condition of his marrying the princess Constantia, and that in the event of his refusing her hand, he would be excluded from the crown of Sicily, which was to devolve to the infant Don Pedro, his brother, on the same condition.

These words strangely surprised Henriquez. They caused him an inexpressible grief, and this grief became still more acute when Leontio, having finished reading the will, addressed the assembly at large in these words:—"My lords, having made known to our new monarch the last injunction of the late king, this generous prince consents to honour his cousin, the princess Constantia, with his hand." At these words Henriquez interrupted the chancellor. "Leontio," he said, "remember the

writing which Blanche . . .” “Sire,” interrupted Siffredi hastily, without giving the prince time to explain himself, “it is here. The nobles of the realm,” he continued, showing the paper to the assembly, “will here perceive, by your Majesty’s august sign manual, the esteem in which you hold the princess, and the deference which you pay to the last intentions of the late king your uncle.”

Having finished these words he read the paper which he had himself filled up. The new king therein solemnly gave to his people a promise to marry Constantia, in conformity with the intentions of Roger. The hall resounded with protracted cries of joy. “Long live our magnanimous King Henriquez !” cried all who were present. As the aversion which the prince had always displayed towards the princess was well known, it was apprehended, not without reason, that he might rebel against the condition of the will, and thus excite civil discord in the kingdom; but the public enunciation of this document completely reassured the nobles and the people, and called forth these general acclamations, which secretly tortured the monarch’s soul.

Constantia, who, both from ambition and from a feeling of tenderness, was more interested in the result than any other human being, chose this moment for expressing her gratitude. The prince tried in vain to re-

press his feelings ; he received the compliment of the princess with so much agitation, he was so greatly troubled, that he could not even reply to her in terms suitable to the occasion. At length, yielding to the violence of his passion, he approached Siffredi, whom the duty of his office kept close to the monarch's person, and said to him in an undertone : " Leontio, what is the meaning of this ? The signature which I placed into your daughter's hands was not intended for such a use as this. You have betrayed me . . . "

" My liege," said Siffredi, again interrupting him, in a firm tone, " think of your glory. If you refuse to obey the will of the king your uncle, you lose the crown of Sicily." No sooner had he said these words than he moved away from the king, so as to prevent his replying. Henriquez was in the utmost perplexity ; he felt himself agitated by a thousand conflicting emotions. He was exasperated against Siffredi, he could not resolve to abandon Blanche ; so that, distracted between thinking of her and the consideration of his own glory, he was for a long time uncertain how to act. At length he made up his mind, and thought he had found a way to secure the daughter of Siffredi without renouncing the throne. He affected his willingness to submit to Roger's will, whilst intending to solicit at Rome a dispensation from a marriage with his

cousin, and in the meanwhile to win over the nobles by his favours, and thus to establish his power so securely, that he could not be compelled to fulfil the conditions of the will.

Having formed this design, he became more tranquil; and turning towards Constantia, confirmed to her what the chancellor had read in the presence of the whole assembly. But, at the very moment when he was playing the traitor so far as to pledge his faith to her, Blanche entered the hall. She came thither by her father's orders to pay her respects to the Princess, and as she entered her ears were greeted by Henriquez' words. Moreover Leontio, determined not to leave her in doubt of her cruel fate, said to her, when he presented her to Constantia: "Daughter, do homage to your queen; wish her a pleasant and prosperous reign and a happy marriage." This terrible blow overwhelmed the unhappy Blanche. She tried in vain to conceal her grief; her face grew red and white alternately, whilst she was trembling from head to foot. The princess, however, had not the least suspicion how the matter stood; but attributed this sudden emotion to the embarrassment of a young girl brought up in solitude, and wholly unaccustomed to the court. But the young king knew the cause. On beholding Blanche he lost countenance, and the despair which he saw in her eyes drove him distracted. He

did not doubt, from what she had heard, that she thought him faithless. His agitation would have been less if he could have spoken to her, but how could he contrive this when all Sicily, as it were, had its eyes upon him? Besides the inhuman Siffredi extinguished every ray of hope. This minister, who read the hearts of these two lovers, and wished to avert the mischief which the violence of their passion might cause the State, quickly led his daughter out of the assembly, and returned to Belmonte with her, resolved, for more reasons than one, to have her married as soon as possible.

After they reached home, he revealed to her all the misery of her destiny, by informing her that he had promised her in marriage to the constable. "Righteous Heaven!" she exclaimed, transported by a paroxysm of despair which her father's presence could not repress, "what frightful torments are still in store for the unfortunate Blanche!" Her despair was indeed so violent as to suspend all vital power. Her whole body turned icy cold, pale, and frigid, and she fell senseless into her father's arms. He was touched by the condition in which he saw her. Nevertheless, though he acutely felt her sufferings, his first resolution was not shaken. Blanche, after a time, recovered her senses, rather through the keenness of her grief than by the water which Siffredi sprinkled in her face; and when, opening her lack-lustre eyes,

she saw who was anxiously employed in assisting her, she said to him in a scarcely audible voice: "My lord, I am ashamed to let you see my weakness; but death, which cannot be long in ending my torments, will soon rid you of an unhappy girl who has ventured to dispose of her heart without your consent." "No, my dear Blanche," replied Leontio, "you shall not die, and virtue shall again resume its sway over you. The Constable's proposals do you honour; his is the most important alliance in the State." "I esteem him and his merits," interrupted Blanche; "but, my lord, the king had made me look forward to . . ." "Daughter," Siffredi broke in, "I anticipate all you can say on that subject. Your partiality for the prince is no secret to me, nor should I disapprove of it under other circumstances. You would even find me anxious to secure Henriquez' hand for you, if considerations for his glory and for the welfare of the State did not compel him to marry Constantia. It was on the sole condition of marrying this princess that the late king has named him his successor. Would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? Believe me, I sympathize with you in the cruel blow which has fallen on you. Yet, since we cannot contravene our destiny, make one generous effort; it is necessary for your own reputation not to allow the whole nation to see that you entertained a delusive hope.

Your affection towards the king might even give rise to ignominious rumours, and the only way of preventing them, is to marry the Constable. In fine, Blanche, the time for hesitation has passed. The king abandons you for the throne; he marries Constantia. The Constable has my word; redeem it, I pray you, and if, in order to determine you, it be necessary for me to use my authority, I command you to obey me."

After having said these words he left her alone, that she might reflect on what had passed. He hoped that, after having weighed the reasons he had made use of to nerve her against the inclinations of her heart, she would of herself resolve to accept the hand of the Constable. He was not mistaken; but how much it cost the unhappy Blanche to take this resolution! She was in a most pitiable condition. The grief of seeing her presentiments as to Henriquez' faithlessness turned into certainty, and of being compelled whilst losing him, to give herself to a man whom she could not love, caused her such violent outbursts of affliction that each successive moment brought her fresh tortures. "If my misfortune," she cried, "is inevitable, how can I bear it and yet remain alive? Pitiless fate, why did you feed me with the sweetest hopes, only to plunge me headlong into an abyss of woe? And, you too, foresworn lover! to give yourself to another, when you

pledged me eternal fidelity ! Could you so soon forget the faith which you had plighted ! May Heaven, to punish you for having so cruelly deceived me, make your marriage-bed, which you are about to pollute by perjury, less the scene of pleasure than of remorse ! May the caresses of Constantia distil poison through your faithless heart ! May your marriage be as hateful to you as mine is to me ! Yes, treacherous man, I mean to marry the Constable, whom I do not love, to be avenged on myself, to punish me for having chosen so unworthily the object of my foolish passion. Since my religious principles forbid me to take my own life, whatever days may be allotted to me shall be but a wretched chain of troubles and unhappiness. If you still retain for me any feeling of love, it will be revenge enough for me to cast myself before your eyes into the arms of another ; and if you have entirely forgotten me, Sicily at least shall boast of having produced a woman who punished herself for having too lightly bestowed her heart."

In such a state of mind this unhappy victim of love and duty passed the night preceding her marriage with the Constable. Siffredi, finding her the next morning disposed to comply with his wishes, hastened to avail himself of this favourable mood. He sent for the Constable to Belmonte on that very day, and the marriage ceremony was performed secretly in the castle

chapel. What a day for Blanche ! It was not enough to renounce a crown, to lose the man she loved and to marry the object of her hatred. In addition to this she had also to disguise her sentiments to a husband who was ardently in love with her, and who was naturally jealous. The Constable, delighted to call her his own, was all day long at her feet. He did not even leave her the sad consolation of bewailing her misfortunes in secret. When night arrived, Leontio's daughter felt her affliction redoubled. But what became of her when her women, after having undressed her, retired and left her alone with the Constable ? He inquired respectfully the cause of her apparent depression. This question embarrassed Blanche, who pretended to be indisposed. Her husband was at first deceived, but he did not continue long in his error. As he was sincerely concerned at the condition in which he saw her, he urged her to go to bed ; but his persistence, upon which she placed a wrong construction, presented to her mind so painful an idea that, unable any longer to restrain herself, she gave a free course to her sighs and tears. What a sight for a man who had believed himself at the height of his desires ! He no longer doubted but his wife's affliction implied something inauspicious to his love. Nevertheless, though this idea threw him into a condition almost as deplorable as that of Blanche, he had enough command over himself

to conceal his suspicions. He redoubled his assiduities, and continued to urge his bride to lie down, assuring her that he would not interrupt the repose of which she seemed so much in need. He even offered to call her women, if she thought their assistance could afford any relief to her suffering. Blanche, reassured by this promise, told him that sleep alone was what she needed in her present weakness. He pretended to believe her. They retired to bed, and passed a very different night from that which love and marriage accord to a loving couple delighted with each other.

Whilst Siffredi's daughter was abandoning herself to her grief, the Constable was endeavouring to discover the cause which rendered his marriage so unbearable. He concluded that there was a rival in the case; but when he attempted to find out who it was, he became bewildered. All he knew was that he was the most unhappy of men. He had already passed two-thirds of the night in these perplexities of thought, when a faint noise greeted his ears. Great was his surprise when he heard some one slowly moving in the room. He fancied he must be deceived; for he remembered that he had himself closed the door, after Blanche's women had retired. He drew back the curtain to see with his own eyes the cause of the noise which he heard;

but the light which had been left in the chamber had gone out. Soon afterwards he heard a soft and tender voice calling Blanche more than once. Immediately his jealous suspicions lashed him into fury; his honour, being alarmed, made him rush from the bed to prevent an insult, or to be avenged for it. He caught up his sword, and flew towards the spot whence the voice seemed to proceed. He felt a naked sword opposed to his own. As he pressed on, the other retired. The pursuit became more eager, but the other vanished. He searched throughout the room for the man who seemed to be fleeing from him, as vigilantly as the darkness would permit him, but found him not. He stood still and listened, but heard nothing more. It seemed like magic. He made for the door, under the idea that this secret enemy of his honour had fled through it; but the door was still locked. Utterly unable to comprehend what had taken place, he called for those of his attendants who were within reach of his voice, and as he opened the door for this purpose, he placed himself in the door-way, and stood on his guard lest the man he was seeking should escape.

Hearing his repeated cries, several servants ran up with lights. He took a candle from one of them, and renewed his search in the room, with his drawn sword in his hand. Yet he

found no one there, nor the least sign that any person had entered it. He saw no secret door, no opening through which any one could have passed; and yet he could not be blind to the circumstances of his misfortune. He remained in a strange confusion of thought. To ask any questions of Blanche was in vain, for she had too much interest in concealing the truth, for him to expect the smallest explanation from her. He determined to go and open his heart to Leontio; and dismissed his attendants, telling them that he thought he had heard some noise in the room, but found that he had been mistaken. His father-in-law had heard the disturbance, and was just coming out of his room; and he then told him what had happened, with every indication of extreme perturbation and profound sadness.

Siffredi was surprised at the occurrence. Though it did not seem to him at all probable, yet he believed it, and as he knew the king's passion capable of everything, the thought afflicted him greatly. But instead of confirming the jealous suspicions of his son-in-law, he represented to him, with an air of assurance, that the voice which he fancied he had heard, and the sword which had crossed his own, could be nothing else than the fantasies of an imagination misled by jealousy; that it was impossible for any one to enter his daughter's room; that, as for the melancholy he had observed in his

wife, it might perhaps have been caused by indisposition; that honour could not be held responsible for alterations in temper; that the change of condition of a girl accustomed to live in retirement, and suddenly given up to a man whom she had not had time to know and love, might well have caused these tears, sighs, and this acute sorrow of which he complained; and that love, in the hearts of maidens of noble birth, was fostered only into a flame by perseverance and by attentions. For these reasons he exhorted him to dismiss his anxieties, to redouble his tenderness and care, so as to induce Blanche to become more affectionate, and ended by beseeching him to return to her apartment, convinced that his mistrust and his uneasiness were offensive to the honour of his wife.

The Constable made no reply to his father-in-law's arguments, either because he really began to think that he might have been deceived by the disorder of his mind, or because he thought it better to dissimulate than vainly to try and convince the old man of so improbable an occurrence. He returned to his wife's apartment, and lying down by her side, endeavoured to obtain from sleep some respite from his anxieties. On the other hand Blanche, the wretched Blanche, was not more at ease. She had heard only too well the same sounds as her husband, and could not treat as an illusion

an occurrence of which she well knew the secret and the motives. She was surprised that Henriquez should seek to introduce himself into her room after having so solemnly pledged his faith to the princess Constantia. Instead of approving this step, and feeling pleasure at it, she regarded it as a new insult, and her heart was inflamed with anger.

Whilst Siffredi's daughter, prejudiced against the young king, thought him the basest of men, that unhappy prince, more in love than ever with Blanche, was anxious to have an interview with her to explain the circumstances which seemed to condemn him. He would have come earlier to Belmonte for this purpose, but press of business, on which he was necessarily engaged, had prevented him, and he had not been able to steal away from his court before that night. He was too well acquainted with all the secret passages of a place where he had been brought up, to have any difficulty in entering Siffredi's castle, and he still retained the key of a secret door leading into the gardens. Thus he reached his old room, and passed thence into Blanche's. Imagine the astonishment of the prince at finding a man there, and feeling a sword opposed to his own! He had almost discovered himself, and ordered the immediate punishment of the audacious wretch who dared raise his sacrilegious hand against his lawful sovereign; but his regard

for Leontio's daughter checked his resentment. He retired, therefore, the same way as he had come; and regained the road to Palermo, more distressed than before. He reached the palace shortly before daylight, and shut himself up in his room. But he was too much agitated to rest, and he could think of nothing save of returning to Belmonte. His tranquillity, his honour, and, above all, his love, would not allow him to delay the explanation of all the circumstances of such a cruel mishap.

As soon as it was daylight he ordered preparations to be made for a hunting party; and under the pretext of sporting, he plunged into the forest of Belmonte accompanied by his huntsmen, and a few of his courtiers. For some time he followed the chase to conceal his intention; and when he saw the whole party eagerly following the hounds, he galloped away from his companions and set out alone towards Leontio's castle. He knew the forest paths too well to lose his way; and as his impatience would not permit him to hold in his horse, in a little time he had covered the distance which separated him from the object of his love. He was thinking of some plausible pretext for securing a private interview with Siffredi's daughter, when, crossing a narrow path which led to one of the gates of the park, he perceived two ladies sitting underneath a tree, in close conversation. He supposed that

these ladies belonged to the castle, and their mere aspect caused him some emotion ; but he became still more agitated when the ladies having turned round at the sound of his horse's feet, he recognised in one of them his beloved Blanche. She had left the castle with Nisa, one of her women, who enjoyed the greatest share of her confidence, that she might at least bewail her misfortune without restraint.

He hastened to cast himself, so to speak, at her feet ; and seeing on her countenance all the signs of the deepest affliction, he was greatly touched at the sight. " Lovely Blanche," he said, " do not give way to these painful emotions. Appearances, I confess, make me seem culpable in your eyes ; but when you shall be made acquainted with the plan I have formed in your behalf, that which you now regard as a crime will appear to you a proof of my innocence, and of the excess of my love." These words, which Henriquez thought were calculated to moderate her grief, seemed only to increase it. She tried to answer, but sobs choked her utterance. The prince, astonished at her excessive emotion, addressed her thus : " What, madam, can I not assuage your grief ? By what mischance have I lost your confidence, when my crown and even my life are at stake to be faithful to you ?" On hearing these words Leontio's daughter, making an effort to

explain herself, said, "My liege, your promises are no longer of any avail. Nothing henceforth can link my fate with yours." "Ah! Blanche," exclaimed Henriquez, interrupting her with warmth, "what cruel words are you addressing to me? Who dares snatch you from my love? Who would venture to oppose the fury of a king who would set all Sicily in a flame rather than suffer you to be torn from him?" "All your power, my liege," replied Siffredi's daughter, in a melancholy tone of voice, "is useless against the obstacles which keep us asunder. I am married to the Constable!"

"You are the wife of the Constable!" exclaimed the prince, starting back. He was unable to say any more, so completely was he thunderstruck at this intelligence. Overwhelmed by this unexpected blow his strength forsook him, and he fell against the foot of a tree behind him. Pale, trembling, overcome, he could only use his eyes, which he fixed on Blanche in such a manner as to make her understand how deeply he felt the fatal event she had just announced to him. She in her turn cast on him a look which plainly told that her emotions were similar to his own. The two unhappy lovers maintained for some time a silence which forboded something terrible. At length the prince picked up enough courage to recover himself slightly, resumed his

speech, and said to Blanche with a sigh: "Madam, what have you done? You have ruined me; you have ruined yourself by your credulity."

Blanche was hurt that the prince should seem to reproach her when she thought she had the strongest reason to complain of him. "What, my lord?" she rejoined, "do you add dissimulation to faithlessness! Would you have me discredit my eyes and ears, and believe you innocent in spite of the evidence of my senses? No, I confess I am not capable of such an effort of reason." "And yet, madam," replied the king, "the witnesses which you think so trustworthy have imposed upon you. They themselves have assisted in deceiving you, and it is no less a fact that I am innocent and faithful and that you are the Constable's wife." "Why, sire, did I not hear you confirm to Constantia the pledge of your hand and heart? Did you not assure the nobles of the realm that you would carry out the will of the late king? And did not the princess receive the homage of your new subjects as their queen and as the bride of King Henriquez? Were my eyes bewitched? No, faithless prince, tell me rather that you did not permit Blanche to outweigh in your heart the temptation of a throne. Instead of abasing yourself to feign what you no longer feel, and what perhaps you never felt, confess that you seemed to be more sure of the crown of Sicily

with Constantia than with Leontio's daughter. You are in the right, my lord, a splendid throne was no more destined for me than the heart of such a prince as yourself. I was too vain in daring to claim either one or the other; but you ought not to have kept me in this error. You may recollect how alarmed I was at the thought of losing you—a loss which seemed to be inevitable. Why did you re-assure me? Was it necessary that you should dispel my apprehensions? I might then have accused Fate rather than yourself, and at least you might have retained my heart, even if you did not obtain my hand, which no other suitor should ever have obtained from me. It is now no time to justify yourself. I am the Constable's wife; and to spare me any further conversation, which may sully my good name, permit me, my lord, without failing in the respect which I owe you, to withdraw from the presence of a prince to whose addresses I am no longer at liberty to listen."

With these words she endeavoured to leave Henriquez with as much haste as her agitation would allow. "Stay, madam," he exclaimed, "do not drive to despair a prince who would rather overturn that throne which you reproach him for having preferred to you, than fulfil the expectations of his new subjects." "That sacrifice is useless now," rejoined Blanche. "You should not have allowed

me to marry the Constable before exhibiting such generous transports. Since I am no longer free, it matters little to me whether Sicily be reduced to ashes, or on whom you bestow your hand. If I have been weak enough to let my heart be surprised, at least I shall muster fortitude enough to suppress its emotions, and to let the new king of Sicily see that the Constable's wife is no longer Prince Henriquez' love." Whilst uttering these words she was close to the park gate, quickly passed through it with Nisa, and, shutting it after her, left the prince overwhelmed with grief. He could not recover from the blow occasioned by the intelligence of Blanche's marriage. "Unjust Blanche," he exclaimed, "you have lost all remembrance of our engagement. In spite of my protestations and your own we are parted! The hope which I had formed of possessing your charms was but a vain illusion after all! Ah! cruel maid, how dearly have I bought the distinction of your responding to my love!"

Then the image of his rival's happiness presented itself to his mind, heightened by all the horrors of jealousy; and this passion took such command over him for a few moments that he was on the point of sacrificing the Constable, and even Siffredi himself, to his resentment. But reason gradually calmed the violence of his transports. And yet the manifest impossibility of removing from Blanche's mind the

impression which she had received of his faithlessness made him desperate. He flattered himself that he might efface it, could he but converse with her freely. To attain this end he judged it necessary to remove the Constable, and he resolved to have him arrested as a person suspected of treasonable designs in the then unsettled state of the commonwealth. He gave the order to the captain of his guard, who went to Belmonte, arrested the Constable at night-fall, and took him to the castle of Palermo.

This event spread consternation in Belmonte. Siffredi set out immediately to offer himself to the king as security for the innocence of his son-in-law, and to point out the sad results of this imprisonment. The prince, who had quite anticipated such a step on the part of his minister, and who wished at all events to obtain an interview with Blanche before releasing the Constable, had given express orders that no one should be admitted to his presence until the next day. But Leontio, in spite of this prohibition, contrived to gain access to the king's apartment. "My liege," he said, in presenting himself before him, "if a respectful and faithful subject may complain to his master, I have come to complain to you of yourself. What crime has my son-in-law committed? Has your Majesty sufficiently reflected on the eternal disgrace which you cast upon my family, and on

the consequences of an imprisonment which may alienate from your service those who fill the most important posts of the realm?" "I have undoubted information," replied the king, "that the Constable carries on a criminal correspondence with the Infant¹ don Pedro." "A criminal correspondence!" Leontio broke in with surprise! "Ah! my liege, do not believe this; your Majesty is imposed upon. Treason never gained a footing in the family of Siffredi; and the fact of the Constable being my son-in-law ought to be sufficient to screen him from all suspicion. The Constable is innocent; but private motives have induced you to arrest him."

"Since you speak to me so openly," rejoined the king, "I will speak with the same sincerity to you. You complain of the Constable's imprisonment. Be it so! Have I no reason to complain of your cruelty? It is you, barbarous Siffredi, who have destroyed my peace of mind, and forced me, by your officious cares, to envy the lot of the lowest of mankind. But do not flatter yourself that I shall enter into your views. My marriage with Constantia is quite out of the question. . . ." "What, my liege!" interrupted Leontio, trembling, "could you fail to marry the princess, after having indulged her in this hope before the whole

¹ "Infant" and "infanta" are Spanish terms equivalent to our "prince" and "princess," as applied to the junior branches of the royal family.

people!" "If I disappoint their expectations," replied the king, "attribute the cause to yourself alone. Why did you reduce me to the necessity of promising what I could not perform? Who obliged you to fill in Constantia's name in a paper which I gave to your daughter? You well knew my intention: need you have tyrannised over the heart of Blanche by compelling her to marry a man whom she did not love? And what right have you over my heart, to dispose of it in favour of a princess whom I hate? Have you forgotten that she is the daughter of that cruel Matilda, who, trampling under foot the claims of relationship and humanity, caused my father to breathe his last amidst the rigours of a merciless captivity? I marry her! No, Siffredi, lay aside that hope. Before lighting the torch of such an abhorred marriage, you shall behold all Sicily in flames, and its very furrows deluged in blood!"

"Do I hear aright?" exclaimed Leontio. "Ah, sire, what a picture you raise before me. What terrible threats! But I alarm myself foolishly," he continued, in an altered tone. "You love your subjects too well to bring such misery upon them. You will not let yourself be overcome by your passion. You will not tarnish your virtues by falling into ordinary human weaknesses. If I have given my daughter's hand to the Constable, I did it, my

liege, only to secure to your Majesty a valiant subject, who might maintain your interest against those of Don Pedro, by his arm and by the troops under his command. I thought that by uniting him to my family by such close bonds. . . .” “These bonds,” cried Prince Henriquez, “these fatal bonds have undone me. Merciless friend, why did you inflict on me so cruel a blow? Did I ask you to consider my interests at the expense of my affections? Why did you not leave me to defend my rights by my own arm? Did I lack the courage to reduce to obedience such of my subjects as would rebel? I should even have known how to punish the Constable if he had disobeyed me. I am well aware that a king ought not to be a tyrant, that the happiness of his people is his first duty; but ought he to be a slave to his subjects? And from the moment when Heaven chooses him to rule, does he lose the right which nature gives to all men, of bestowing his affections on whomsoever he pleases? Ah! if kings cannot enjoy these rights like the lowest of mortals, take back, Siffredi, that sovereign power which you affect to have secured to me at the expense of my personal happiness.”

“You cannot ignore, my liege,” the minister replied, “that it is on your marriage with the princess that the late king, your uncle, made the succession to the throne to depend.” “And

what right," replied Henriquez, "had even he to make such a disposition? Was it on such unworthy terms that he succeeded his brother, King Charles? Ought you to have been weak enough to submit to so unjust a stipulation? For a Lord Chancellor, you are but ill acquainted with our laws and customs. To cut the matter short, though I have promised my hand to Constantia, the engagement was not voluntary. I do not intend to keep my promise; and if Don Pedro bases on my refusal any hope of ascending the throne, without involving the nation in a quarrel which would cost too much blood, the sword shall decide between us which of us two is most worthy to reign." Leontio dared not urge anything further, but satisfied himself with asking on his knees for the liberty of his son-in-law; a boon which he obtained. "Go," said the king to him, "return to Belmonte, whither the Constable will follow you soon." The minister accordingly hastened home, believing that his son-in-law would follow him shortly. But in this he was mistaken. Henriquez desired to visit Blanche that night, and therefore postponed the release of the Constable until the next morning.

Meanwhile the Constable was plunged in bitter reflexions. His imprisonment had opened his eyes to the true cause of his misfortune. He gave himself entirely up to his jealousy,

and forswearing the fidelity which had hitherto redounded so much to his credit, his thoughts were all bent on vengeance. Feeling convinced that the king would not fail to visit Blanche that night, and in order that he might surprise them together, he besought the governor of the castle of Palermo to allow him to leave his prison, assuring him that he would return next day before daybreak. The governor, who was a great friend of his, gave his permission so much the more readily, as he already knew that Siffredi had obtained his freedom; he even supplied him with a horse to take him to Belmonte. The Constable, on his arrival, tied his horse to a tree, entered the park by a little gate of which he had the key, and was fortunate enough to get into the castle without meeting anyone. On reaching his wife's room, he concealed himself in an antechamber, behind a screen, placed as if purposely for his use, intending to watch all that might take place, and to rush suddenly into Blanche's room, at the slightest noise he might hear. The first object he beheld was Nisa, taking leave of her mistress, and withdrawing to her own sleeping apartment.

Siffredi's daughter, who had easily divined the reason of her husband's imprisonment, was fully convinced that he would not return that night to Belmonte, though her father had communicated to her the king's assurance

that the Constable should set out immediately after him. She did not doubt that Henriquez would avail himself of the circumstances to come and converse with her freely. With this expectation she awaited the prince, to reproach him for a line of conduct of such terrible consequences to her. As she had anticipated, soon after Nisa had retired, the panel opened, and the king came and threw himself at Blanche's feet. "Madam," he said, "do not condemn me without hearing. If I have ordered the Constable to be thrown into prison, remember that it was the only means remaining by which I might justify myself. Attribute that stratagem, therefore, to yourself alone. Why did you refuse to listen to me this morning? Alas! to-morrow your husband will be free, and I shall no longer have an opportunity of speaking to you. Hear me then for the last time. If the loss of you makes me wretched for ever, at least grant me the melancholy satisfaction of apprising you that I have not brought on this misfortune by my own faithlessness. If I confirmed the gift of my hand to Constantia, it was because I could not help it in the situation to which your father's policy had reduced us. I was compelled to deceive the princess, for your sake and my own, in order to secure to you the crown and the hand of your lover. I flattered myself I should succeed in this; I

had already taken measures to supersede that engagement; but you have destroyed my work, and by disposing of your hand too precipitately, you have laid up an eternal sorrow for two hearts which a perfect love might have rendered happy."

He concluded this speech with such evident tokens of genuine despair that Blanche became affected. She no longer doubted his innocence. It caused her joy in the first instance; but then the sense of her unhappiness became more acute. "Ah! my lord," she said to the prince, "since destiny has thus disposed of us, you only inflict a new pang on me by informing me that you were not to blame! What have I done, unhappy woman? My resentment has led me astray. I thought myself abandoned, and in my anger accepted the hand of the Constable, at my father's bidding. I alone am the guilty cause of our misfortunes. Alas! whilst I was accusing you of deceiving me, it was I, too credulous and impassioned, who broke the bonds I had sworn for ever to keep inviolate. Avenge yourself, my lord, in your turn. Detest the ungrateful Blanche . . . Forget . . ."

"Alas! can I do it, madam?" Henriquez broke in with a dejected air; "how can I tear from my heart a passion which your very injustice could not extinguish?" "Yet you must make this effort, my liege," retorted Siffredi's daughter with a sigh. "And are you capable of it yourself?"

replied the king. "I am not confident of my success," she rejoined; "but I shall spare no pains to attain my object." "Oh, unfeeling woman," said the prince, "you will easily forget Henriquez, since you can contemplate such a design." "What, then, do you imagine?" said Blanche, more firmly. "Do you flatter yourself that I could suffer you to continue paying me attentions? No, my lord, abandon that hope. If I was not born to be a queen, neither has Heaven formed me to listen to illicit addresses. My husband, like yourself, my liege, is allied to the noble house of Anjou; and even if my duty did not oppose an insurmountable obstacle to your gallantry, my sense of pride would forbid me to permit it. I entreat you to withdraw; we must meet no more." "How can you be so cruel!" exclaimed the king. "Ah! Blanche, is it possible that you should treat me with such severity? It is not enough then, to overwhelm me that you should be in the Constable's arms; you must also forbid me to see you, which is the only consolation remaining to me!" "Avoid me, for that very reason," cried Siffredi's daughter, who was now in tears, "the sight of what we have dearly loved is no longer a happiness when we have lost all hope of possessing it. Farewell, my lord, avoid me; you owe this effort to your own honour and to my reputation. I claim it also for my own peace of mind; for, although

my virtue can combat the emotions of my heart, the very remembrance of your affection stirs up such a cruel conflict that it is almost too much for me to bear."

She uttered these words with so much excitement that she accidentally overturned a candlestick on the table behind her; and the candle was extinguished in falling. Blanche picked it up, and in order to light it again, opened the door of the antechamber, and went to Nisa's room, who had not yet gone to bed. Then she returned with the light. The king, who was waiting for her, no sooner saw her approach than he again pressed her to listen to his love. Hearing the prince's voice, the Constable, sword in hand, impetuously rushed into the room, almost at the same moment as his wife. Advancing to Henriquez with all the rage which his resentment kindled within him, he cried, "Tyrant, this is too much! Do not flatter yourself that I am base enough to endure the outrage offered to my honour." "Ah! traitor," replied the king, standing on his guard, "do not imagine that you can carry out your design with impunity." With these words they entered on a conflict which was too furious to last long. The Constable, fearing that Siffredi and his servants, alarmed by Blanche's shrieks, would soon come and prevent his vengeance, fought without taking any care of himself. His frenzy deprived him of

all judgment; in his rashness he himself ran upon his adversary's sword, which entered his body up to the hilt. He fell; and the king instantly checked his rage.

Leontio's daughter, touched by her husband's condition, and overcoming the natural repugnance which she felt for him, threw herself on the ground and eagerly attempted to aid him. But the unhappy husband was too much prejudiced against her to be softened by the evidences of her grief and pity. Death, which he felt approaching, could not allay the transports of his jealousy. In his last moments he thought only of the happiness of his rival; and this idea appeared to him so insufferable that, summoning all his remaining strength, he raised his sword, which was still in his hand, and plunged it into Blanche's breast. "Die," he said, as he stabbed her, "die, faithless wife, since the ties of wedlock could not protect the vow which you had sworn to me at the altar! And as for you, Henriquez," he continued, "triumph not too loudly. You are prevented from benefiting by my misfortune. I die content." Scarcely had he uttered these words when he expired; and his face, clouded with the shadow of death, still retained a fierce and terrible look. Blanche's countenance presented a quite different aspect. The blow she had received was mortal. She fell on the body of her dying husband; and the blood of this

innocent victim was mingled with that of her murderer, who had executed his cruel resolve so suddenly that the king had been unable to prevent it.¹

The ill-fated prince uttered a loud cry as he saw Blanche fall; and, pierced deeper than herself by the blow which robbed her of life, he hastened to bestow upon her the same succour that she had offered to her husband, and for which she had been so ill requited. But she said to him, with her dying breath: "My lord, all the trouble you take is in vain. I am the victim which merciless Fate exacted. May this sacrifice appease its anger, and may it secure the happiness of your reign!" As she was uttering these words, Leontio, drawn thither by her shrieks, entered the room, and stood motionless at the sight which presented itself. Blanche, without noticing his presence, continued addressing herself to the king. "Farewell, prince," she said, "cherish my memory; my affection and my misfortunes claim this of you. Do not entertain any resentment against

¹ The poem *Henry and Blanche*, already mentioned in the INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, versifies the wounding of Rodolpho—for so the Constable is called in the poem—and ends oddly with the following lines:—

"May Love and Freedom e'er on Britain smile,
No cruel Father with tyrannick sway
Compel a trembling Daughter to obey;
And may the Fair that grace this happy Land
Bestow the Heart to whom they give the Hand;
So shall transporting Joy reward their Youth,
Their Age be blessed with Friendship, Peace and Truth."

my father. Be a comfort to his remaining days; assuage his sorrows, and render justice to his zeal. Above all, convince him of my innocence—I charge you with that more than with aught else. Farewell, dear Henriquez . . . I am dying . . . receive my last breath.”

Whilst saying these words she expired. The king maintained a sullen silence for a while. Then he said to Siffredi, who was almost lifeless with grief: “Behold, Leontio; contemplate your work; see, in this tragical occurrence, the fruits of your officious cares and zeal for my service.” The old man made no reply, so deep was his grief. But why should I linger to describe what no words can express? Let it suffice to say that they mutually uttered the most touching lamentations, as soon as their grief permitted their emotion to find vent.

Through the whole course of his life the king retained a tender recollection of Blanche. He could not be prevailed upon to marry Constantia. The Infant Don Pedro was united to that princess, and both used every effort to have the will of Roger carried into execution; but they were compelled in the end to yield to Prince Henriquez, who triumphed over all his enemies. As for Siffredi, the sorrow which he felt at having caused so many misfortunes, made him weary of the world, and rendered his native country insupportable to him. He bade farewell to Sicily, and crossing over into Spain

with his surviving daughter Portia, he purchased this castle. Here he lived nearly fifteen years after the death of Blanche, and, before he died, he had the consolation of seeing Portia settled. She married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only issue of their union. Such, continued the widow of Don Pedro de Pinares, is the history of my family, and a faithful account of the melancholy events, represented in this picture, which my grandfather Leontio ordered to be painted, that he might leave to posterity a memorial of the fatal adventure I have related.

CHAPTER V.

AURORA DE GUZMAN'S BEHAVIOUR ON ARRIVING AT SALAMANCA.

ORTIZ, her fellow-servants and myself, after having heard this tale, withdrew from the room, where we left Aurora with Donna Elvira. They spent the rest of the day in conversation, and did not grow weary of each other; for, the next morning, when we left, they were as much affected at parting, as if they had been two friends who had been accustomed to live agreeably together.

In due time we reached Salamanca without mishap. Here we at once hired a ready fur-

nished house; and dame Ortiz, as it had been arranged, took the name of Donna Ximena de Guzman. She had been a duenna too long not to be a good actress. One morning she went out with Aurora, a maid, and a man-servant, and betook herself to a boarding-house where we had been informed Pacheco usually lodged. She asked if there were any apartments to let, and being answered in the affirmative, and being shown one which was tolerably neat, she engaged it, and paid down earnest to the landlady, telling her the room was for one of her nephews, who was coming from Toledo to study at Salamanca, and might be expected that very day.

The duenna and my mistress, after securing these lodgings, returned home; and the fair Aurora, without loss of time, transformed herself into a gentleman. She concealed her black hair under a flaxen wig, dyed her eyebrows the same colour, and made herself up in such a way that she could easily pass for a young nobleman. Her bearing was free and easy, and except that her face was somewhat too handsome for a man's, there was nothing in her appearance to betray her. The maid who was to act as her page also changed her dress, and we had no fear that she would act her part badly; for besides that she was not particularly pretty she had a confident manner, which exactly suited her part. In the afternoon, our two actresses

being ready to make their first appearance on the stage, namely, the boarding-house, took me along with them. The three of us went in a carriage, and took all the baggage that we required.

The landlady, Bernarda Ramirez by name, received us with much civility, and led us to our rooms, where we entered into conversation with her. We agreed as to the terms on which she was to board us, by the month. Then we asked her if she had many boarders. "I have none just now," she replied; "I might have plenty if I cared to take all sorts of people; but I only want young noblemen. I am expecting one to-night, who is coming from Madrid to complete his studies. His name is Don Lewis Pacheco, a young gentleman of at most twenty; if you do not know him personally you may have heard of him before now." "No," said Aurora; "I am aware that he is of good family, but I do not know what sort of a man he is; so please tell me, as we are to live in the same house together." "Sir," rejoined the landlady, looking at the mock gentleman, "he has a very fine figure, and is pretty much like you. O! you will get on well together! By Saint Iago, I shall be able to boast of having in my house the two handsomest noblemen in Spain." "This Don Lewis," asked Aurora, "has doubtless some intrigues in this town?" "Oh, that he has," replied the old lady; "he is a brisk

gallant, upon my word. He has but to show himself to conquer. Among others he has captivated a lovely young lady, called Isabella, the daughter of an old doctor of laws; and she is so fond of him that she will really go off her head about him." "Tell me, my good woman," Aurora broke in hastily, "is he as much in love with her?" "He used to be very fond of her before he left for Madrid," replied Bernarda Ramirez, "but I cannot tell whether he loves her yet; for in these matters he is not much to be depended upon. He flirts first with one woman and then with another,—it is the way with all young noblemen."

The good widow had scarcely finished speaking when we heard a noise in the court-yard. On looking out of the window we saw two men alighting from horseback. It was the identical Don Lewis arrived from Madrid with his servant. The old woman left us to go and receive him; and my mistress prepared, not over calmly, to play the part of Don Felix. We soon saw Don Lewis coming into our room in his travelling dress. "I have just learned," he said, paying his respects to Aurora, "that a young nobleman from Toledo has taken apartments in this house: will he permit me to express my pleasure in having him for a fellow-boarder?" Whilst my mistress replied to this compliment, it seemed to me that Pacheco was

surprised to behold such an attractive young man. Indeed, he could not refrain from telling her that he had never seen so handsome and so well-shaped a young fellow. After many speeches full of politeness on both sides, Don Lewis retired to his own room.

Whilst he was having his boots taken off, and changing his dress and linen, a sort of page on the look out to deliver a letter to him, happened to meet Aurora on the stairs. He mistook her for Don Lewis, and giving her the note with which he had been intrusted, said: "Here, my lord; though I do not know Señor Pacheco, I do not think I need ask if you are he; from the description given to me of that nobleman I am sure I am not mistaken." "No, my friend," replied my mistress with admirable presence of mind, "you are certainly not mistaken. You execute your messages wonderfully well. You are right in supposing me to be Don Lewis Pacheco. You may retire; I will be sure to send an answer. The page disappeared, and Aurora, shutting herself in with her maid and myself, opened the letter and read out to us as follows: "I have just learned that you are in Salamanca. With what joy did I receive the news! I thought I should have gone out of my senses! But do you still love Isabella? Lose no time in assuring her that you are not changed. I think she will expire with pleasure if she finds you the same as ever."

“This note is impassioned,” said Aurora; “it shews that this lady is desperately in love, and is a rival not to be despised. No pains must be spared to separate her from Don Lewis, and even to prevent him from seeing her again. I confess that the task is difficult; but I do not despair of success.” Thereupon my mistress fell into a fit of musing; and soon afterwards continued:—“I warrant you they shall have fallen out in less than twenty-four hours.” It so happened that Pacheco, having rested awhile in his room, came again to visit us in ours, and once more entered into conversation with Aurora whilst waiting for supper. “Noble sir,” he said, jestingly, “I fancy that the husbands and lovers have no reason to rejoice at your arrival at Salamanca; you will make some of these fellows’ hearts uneasy. Even I tremble for my conquests.” “Indeed!” said my mistress, in the same tone, “your fear is not ill founded. Don Felix de Mendoza is rather redoubtable, so take care what you are about. I have been in this neighbourhood before; and I know that the women here are not insensible.” “Have you any proof of that?” Don Lewis interrupted, eagerly. “Convincing proof,” replied Don Vincent’s daughter. “About a month ago I passed through this town, and stayed here for eight days; and I can tell you in confidence I made an impression on the daughter of an old doctor of laws.”

At these words it was evident that Don Lewis was disconcerted. "Might one without indiscretion," he replied, "ask you the lady's name?" "What do you mean by your 'without indiscretion'?" exclaimed the pretended Don Felix; "why should I make a mystery of it? Do you think me more discreet than other noblemen of my age? Do not do me that injustice. Besides, between ourselves, the object is not worthy of so much reserve; she is only a little citizen's daughter. You know that a man of quality does not seriously trouble himself about a shop-girl, and even thinks he confers honour on her when he leaves her without any. I shall, therefore, tell you without any further ceremony that the name of the doctor's daughter is Isabella." "And the doctor's," interrupted Pacheco, hastily, "is it Murcia de la Llana?"¹ "Precisely so," said my mistress. "Here is a letter she has just sent; read it, and then you will see whether the girl is disposed to be kind to me." Don Lewis glanced at the note, and recognising the handwriting, was struck dumb with astonishment and vexation. "What do I see?" Aurora continued, with an air of astonishment; "you change colour? Why, Heaven forgive me! I think you are interested in this creature. How vexed I am for having spoken to you so freely!"

¹ According to Llorente, Murcia de la Llana was a censor of books at Madrid in 1638.

“I thank you very much for doing so,” said Don Lewis, in a transport of wrath and vexation. “The faithless, fickle creature! Don Felix, I am greatly indebted to you! You dispel an error in which I might have persevered ever so long. I fancied I was loved; loved, did I say? I thought I was adored by Isabella! I had some regard for that creature; but now I see that she is a mere light-of-love; and I despise her as she deserves!”

“Your resentment does you credit,” said Aurora, feigning some indignation herself. “A doctor at law’s daughter might have been contented with so amiable a nobleman as you for her lover. I cannot excuse her inconstancy; and far from accepting the sacrifice she makes of you, I am determined, henceforth, to slight her favours, to punish her.” “As for me,” replied Don Pacheco, “I shall never see her again as long as I live; that is the only revenge I shall take.” “You are right,” exclaimed the pretended Mendoza. “And to let her know how we both despise her, I propose we should each of us sit down and write her an insulting note; they shall be enclosed in one envelope, and serve as an answer to her letter. But before we go to that length, consult your heart. Do you think you are sufficiently weaned from that faithless girl not to fear that you might one day repent of having broken with her?” “No, no,” interrupted

Don Lewis, "I shall never be so weak as that! I agree that, to mortify the ungrateful girl, we do as you propose."

I went at once to fetch pen, ink, and paper, and they both sat down to indite very polite letters for the daughter of Doctor Murcia de la Llana. Pacheco especially could not find words sufficiently strong to express his feelings, and he tore up five or six letters half finished, because they did not seem severe enough. However, at last, he produced one that pleased him, as it might well do. It ran as follows:—
"Learn to know yourself, my princess, and do not be vain enough to think that I love you. Merit of a far different compass is needed to captivate me. You are not even entertaining enough to afford me a few minutes' amusement. You are only good enough to divert the meanest scholars in the University." That was the elegant epistle he wrote, and when Aurora had finished her own, which was no less effusive, she sealed them both, put them in an envelope, and giving me the packet said: "Here, Gil Blas, let Isabella receive this to-night. You quite understand me?" she added, giving me a wink which I perfectly comprehended. "Yes, my lord," I replied, "your commands shall be executed."

I took my departure immediately, and when I was in the street I said to myself: "So, ho! Master Gil Blas, your genius is being put to the

proof; you are to be the valet in this comedy? Well, my friend, show that you have the intelligence to take a part which needs plenty of it. Señor Don Felix thinks a wink enough for you. He counts, you see, on your wit. Is he wrong? No, I can see what he expects of me. He wishes me to deliver only Don Lewis's note; that is what his wink meant; nothing could be clearer." Convinced that I was right, I did not hesitate to break open the envelope. I took out Pacheco's letter, and went away with it to Doctor Murcia's, whose residence I soon discovered. At the very threshold I met the little page who had been at our boarding-house. "Comrade," I said to him, "might you possibly be servant to Doctor Murcia's daughter?" He replied in the affirmative, with an air which showed sufficiently that he was used to take and bring back love-letters. "You have such an obliging countenance," I rejoined, "that I venture to ask you to take this billet-doux to your mistress."

The little page asked me from whom it came, and I had no sooner replied that it was from Don Lewis Pacheco than he said: "If that's the case, follow me; I have orders to take you in doors; Isabella wants to speak with you." I went with him into a small room, where I did not stay long before the lady herself appeared. I was struck by the beauty of her face; I never saw more refined features.

Her manner was somewhat affected and childish; but that had not prevented her, for these thirty years at least, from walking without leading-strings. "Friend," she said to me with an encouraging smile, "are you one of Don Lewis Pacheco's servants?" I answered that I had been his valet for three weeks. Then I gave her the fatal letter with which I was entrusted. She read it twice or thrice; and it seemed as though she could not believe her eyes. Indeed, such an answer was the last thing she could have expected. She raised her eyes toward Heaven, bit her lips, and for some time her face showed the pangs she felt at heart. Then, suddenly addressing me, she said: "My friend, has Don Lewis gone mad since I saw him last? I cannot understand his way of treating me. Can you tell me why he writes to me in such a style? What demon possesses him? If he wished to break with me, might he not have done it without insulting me by such an abusive letter?"

"Madam," said I, putting on an air of great sincerity, "my master is doubtless wrong, but he has been, as it were, forced to do it. If you will promise me to keep the secret, I shall explain the whole mystery to you." "I promise it," she interrupted with eagerness; "do not fear that I shall compromise you; explain yourself without reserve." "Well, then!" I replied, "this is the business in a few words. A moment after the receipt of your letter, there came to

our lodgings a lady wholly rapt up in a very thick cloak and hood. She asked for Señor Pacheco, and spoke to him some time in private, and at the close of their conversation I overheard her saying, ‘You swear to me never to see her again; to set my heart completely at rest you must write to her instantly a letter which I will dictate to you; that is what I demand from you.’ Don Lewis did as she desired; and then, putting the letter into my hand, the lady said: ‘Find out where Doctor Murcia lives, and give this letter adroitly to his daughter Isabella.’ You see plainly, madam,” I continued, “that this disagreeable letter is the work of a rival, and that consequently my master is not so much to blame.” “Oh, Heaven,” she exclaimed, “he is even more so than I believed! His faithlessness hurts me more than the stinging words which he has written. Oh, the treacherous wretch, he has formed another connection! . . . But,” she added, assuming a lofty air, “let him abandon himself without constraint to his new passion; I shall never cross him. Tell him, please, that he need not have insulted me to make me leave a fair field to my rival, and that I despise a fickle lover too much to have the least desire of recalling him.” Saying these words she dismissed me, and withdrew in high wrath against Don Lewis.

I quitted Doctor Murcia de la Llana’s much

pleased with myself, and perceived that, if I cared to set up for a genius, I should become a clever rogue. I returned to our house, where I found my lords Mendoza and Pacheco supping together, and conversing as though they had known each other for a long time. Aurora perceived by my cheerful countenance that I had not discharged my duty amiss. "So you have come back, Gil Blas," she said; "give us an account of your mission." It was necessary for me again to appeal to my wits, so I told them that I had delivered the packet into Isabella's own hands; and that she, after having read the two notes which it contained, instead of appearing disconcerted, burst into a fit of laughter, as if she had been mad, saying: "Upon my word, our young noblemen write in a nice style; it must be confessed that plebeians write less amusingly." "That was a clever way of getting out of her dilemma," exclaimed my mistress; "she is certainly an arrant light-of-love." "For my part," said Don Lewis, "I cannot recognise Isabella by such behaviour; her character must have completely changed while I have been away." "I too should have expected from her something very different," replied Aurora. "It must be admitted some women can assume all sorts of appearances. I was once in love with one of these, and was her dupe for a long time. Gil Blas can tell you the whole story; she had

an air of propriety about her which might have imposed upon the whole world." "It is true," said I, joining in; "she had a face which might have lured the most wary. I should have been taken in by it myself."

The pretended Mendoza and Pacheco burst out laughing when they heard this, and far from objecting to my freedom in taking part in their conversation, they frequently spoke to me to amuse themselves with my replies. We went on talking about women who possess the art of playing a part; and the result of our conversation was that Isabella stood duly attainted and convicted of being an arrant light-of-love. Don Lewis once more declared that he would never see her again; and Don Felix, following his example, swore that he would despise her for ever. By dint of these protestations they struck up a mutual friendship, and promised to conceal nothing from each other. After supper they began to exchange compliments, and finally separated to go to bed each in his own apartment. I followed Aurora into hers, where I gave her a faithful account of my conversation with the doctor's daughter. I did not forget the slightest detail; and even recounted more than had taken place, in order to flatter my mistress, who was delighted by my report. She nearly embraced me in the excess of her joy. "My dear Gil Blas," she said, "I am charmed by your understanding. When one is un-

fortunate enough to be devoured by a passion which forces us to have recourse to stratagems, it is a great advantage to have in one's interests such an intelligent young man as you are! Courage, my friend; we have got rid of a rival who might have given us some trouble! That is not a bad stroke of business! But, as lovers are subject to strange relapses, I think we must lose no time, and bring Aurora de Guzman on the stage to-morrow morning." I approved the notion, and leaving my lord Don Felix alone with his page, I withdrew to bed in an adjoining closet.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STRATAGEMS RESORTED TO BY AURORA TO MAKE
DON LEWIS PACHECO FALL IN LOVE WITH HER.

THE two new friends met again the next morning; it was the first thing they thought of. They began the day with embracing each other—to which Aurora could not demur, if she were to sustain the part of Don Felix. They afterwards went out together for a walk in the town, and I accompanied them with Chilindron,¹ Don Lewis's servant. We loitered near the University, to look at some advertisements

¹ *Chilindron* is the Spanish for "a certain game at cards."

of new publications which had just been fixed on the gates. There were a good many people amusing themselves, like us, by reading them; and amongst these my eye was caught by a little man who gave his opinion on the different works that were so advertised. I observed that he was listened to very attentively, and at the same time I fancied that he thought he amply deserved to be listened to. He seemed vain, and very dogmatic, as most undersized men are. "This new translation of Horace," he said, "which you see announced in such large characters, is a prose work, written by an old college author. The students have taken a great fancy to the book; they alone have bought four editions of it; but there is not a man of taste who has purchased a copy."¹ He did not pass more favourable judgments on the other books, but assailed them all unmercifully.² No doubt he was an author.³ I should not have been sorry to hear him out; but I was obliged to follow Don Lewis and Don Felix, who, taking no more pleasure in his remarks than they took

¹ A French translation of Horace, which sold well only amongst the students, was written by the Jesuit Tarteron and published at Paris and Amsterdam, in 1710.

² Tradition says that part of this chapter, wherein Lesage attacked some living authors, has been curtailed.

³ This author and merciless critic is supposed to have been a certain Mr Boindin, whom Voltaire satirized under the name of *M. Barbou*, "*qui toujours parle, argue et contredit.*"

interest in the books he was criticising, left him and the University behind.

We returned to our rooms at dinner time. My mistress sat down to table with Pacheco, and cleverly led up the conversation to her family. "My father," she said, "is a younger son of the house of Mendoza, settled at Toledo, and my mother is own sister to Donna Ximena de Guzman, who a few days ago came to Salamanca on important business with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Guzman, whom possibly you might be acquainted with." "No," replied Don Lewis, "but I have often heard of him, and of your cousin Aurora as well. Am I to believe all that is said of this young lady? They declare that her mind and her beauty are alike unrivalled." "As for her mind," replied Don Felix, "she is not devoid of it, and she has even cultivated it; but she is not particularly handsome: indeed we are said to be very much alike." "If that be the case," exclaimed Pacheco, "she justifies her reputation. Your features are regular, your complexion is perfectly lovely; your cousin ought to be charming; I should much like to see and converse with her." "I undertake to gratify your curiosity," replied the pretended Mendoza, "and this very day, too. We will go and see my aunt this afternoon."

My mistress suddenly changed the subject

of the conversation, and spoke of indifferent matters. In the afternoon, as they were preparing to go to Donna Ximena's, I went on beforehand, and hastened to warn the duenna to get ready for our visit. Then I returned to accompany Don Felix, who at length took Don Lewis to his aunt's. But hardly had they entered the house when they met Mistress Ximena, who, by gestures, desired them not to make a noise. "Hush! hush!" she said in a low voice, "you will wake my niece. Ever since yesterday she has had a frightful headache, but is just now a little better; the poor child has only been asleep for the last quarter of an hour." "I am sorry for this disappointment," said Mendoza, pretending to be annoyed, "I was in hopes we should have seen my cousin; I had promised that pleasure to my friend Pacheco." "The matter is not so urgent," answered Ortiz, with a smile, "but that you can defer it till to-morrow." The two visitors then had a short conversation with the old lady, and went away.

Don Lewis took us to the house of one of his friends, a young gentleman named Don Gabriel de Pedros.¹ There we spent the remainder of the day, took our supper and did not

¹ Llorente rightly says that there is in Spain no noble family of the name of Pedros, but one of Pedroso. Lesage speaks (vol. i. Bk. III. chap. 3) of a Countess de Pedrosa to whom Don Mathias owes and sends two hundred pistoles.

leave until two in the morning to go home. We had gone about half way when we stumbled over two men lying in the street. We thought they were some unfortunate persons who had just been assassinated, and stopped to assist them, if it should not be too late. As we were trying to make out what was the matter with them, as well as the darkness would allow, the patrol came up. The officer at first took us for the assassins, and ordered his men to surround us; but he conceived a more favourable opinion of us on hearing the sound of our voices, and on seeing, by the light of a dark lantern, the features of Mendoza and Pacheco. By his direction the soldiers examined the two men whom we thought to have been killed. They turned out to be a fat licentiate and his servant, both overtaken with wine, or rather dead drunk. "Gentlemen," cried one of the patrol, "I know this jolly fellow. He is the Licentiate Guyomar,¹ the rector of our University. Though you see him now in such a state he is a great character, a man of superior genius. There is no philosopher whom he cannot worst in argument; he

¹ *Guyomar* is said to be a contraction of Guillaume Dagoumer, a celebrated professor at the College of Harcourt, and rector of the University of Paris. According to Colmenar's *Délices de l'Espagne*, the eight Professors of Theology of Salamanca, called *Cathedráticos*, chose formerly every year the rector of that University, who was always of noble birth, ruled with absolute power, possessed great privileges and an enormous income. There were usually from four to five thousand scholars at Salamanca, and one year even seven thousand.

has at his command an unparalleled flow of words. It is a great pity that he is too fond of wine, litigation, and women. He has been supping at his Isabella's, where, unfortunately, his man got drunk as well as himself, and they have both fallen into the gutter. Before the good licentiate became rector this used often to happen. Honours, you see, do not always mend manners." Leaving these tipsy worthies in the hands of the patrol—who took the trouble to carry them home—we reached our house, each of us bent on getting some rest.

Don Felix and Don Lewis rose about noon ; and when they had come together again Aurora de Guzman was the first topic of their conversation. "Gil Blas," said my mistress, "go to my Aunt Ximena's, and ask her from me if Señor Pacheco and I may come to-day to see my cousin." I left to carry out this commission, or rather to arrange with the duenna what to do ; and when we had taken our measures I came back to the mock Mendoza, and said : "Sir, your cousin Aurora is quite well again ; she bids me tell you that your visit would give her much pleasure ; and Donna Ximena desired me to say to Señor Pacheco that he will always be perfectly welcome at her house for your sake."

I saw that these last words pleased Don Lewis. My mistress observed the same thing, and interpreted it as a happy omen. Just before

dinner the servant of Mistress Ximena arrived, and said to Don Felix : “ My lord, a gentleman from Toledo has been inquiring for you at your aunt’s house, and left this note.” The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read out aloud its contents : “ If you wish to hear some news from your father, and some matters of importance to you, do not fail, as soon as you receive this, to call at the Black Horse, near the University.” “ I am too anxious to know,” she continued, “ what these important matters are, not to satisfy my curiosity immediately. I shall not say good-bye, Pacheco. If I am not back again in two hours, go to my aunt’s alone, and I will meet you there in the afternoon. You know the message Gil Blas brought you from Donna Ximena ; this justifies your paying her a visit.” After having said this she went out, and ordered me to follow her.

You may easily fancy that, instead of going to the Black Horse, we took our way to the house where Ortiz lived. As soon as we were within doors we prepared for our comedy. Aurora took off her flaxen wig, washed and rubbed her pencilled eyebrows, resumed female attire, and became once more a lovely brunette. Her disguise really altered her so much that Aurora and Don Felix seemed to be two different people ; it even appeared as though she were taller as a woman than as a man ; but her

sandals,¹ which had very high heels, contributed greatly to this. When she had heightened her charms with all the embellishments which art could provide, she awaited Don Lewis in a state of agitation, compounded of hope and fear. At one time she felt confident in her wit and beauty, and at another feared that she would not succeed in her attempt. Ortiz, on her part, summoned all her address to second my mistress. As for me, as Pacheco was not to see me in the house, and as, like actors who only come in for the last act of the play, I was only to show myself at the end of the visit, I went away as soon as I had dined.

All was ready when Don Lewis arrived. He was very courteously received by Donna Ximena, and had a conversation of two or three hours with Aurora; then I entered the room where they had been together, and addressing myself to Don Lewis, said: "My lord, Don Felix will not be here to-day. He prays you to excuse him; he is with three gentlemen of Toledo, of whom he cannot get rid." "O! the little rake!" exclaimed Donna Ximena; "no doubt he is having a drinking bout." "No, madam," I replied, "they are engaged on very serious

¹ The original has *chappin*, sandals, worn by Spanish ladies over the shoes, of which the Countess d'Aulnoy, in the eighth letter of her *Relation*, says: "The *chapins*, a kind of small sandals of brocade or velvet, are ornamented with gold plates, which makes their wearers appear half a foot taller. When the ladies put them on they walk very badly, and are nearly always falling."

business. He is very much annoyed that he cannot come here; and commissioned me to say so to you, as well as to Donna Aurora." "O! I will have none of his excuses," said my mistress, jestingly; "he knows that I have been indisposed, and might show a little more attention to his relatives. To punish him, I will not see him for a fortnight." "Nay, madam," replied Don Lewis at once, "do not take such a cruel resolve; Don Felix is sufficiently to be pitied for not having seen you."

They diverted themselves for some time with such topics, and then Pacheco retired. The lovely Aurora immediately transformed herself, resumed her gentleman's dress, and returned to the boarding-house as quickly as she could. "Pardon me, my dear friend," said she to Don Lewis, "for not coming to meet you at my aunt's; but there was no getting rid of the people I was with. However, there is one comfort; you have at least had leisure to satisfy your curiosity. Well! what do you think of my cousin? Tell me frankly." "I am charmed with her," replied Pacheco. "You were right to say that she resembled you. I never saw two faces more alike; you have the same cast of countenance, the same eyes, the same mouth, and the same voice. But, of course, there is a difference. Aurora is taller than you; she is dark, and you are fair; you are cheerful, and she is demure; but that is all the difference I can perceive.

As for her intelligence," he continued, "I do not think that an angel from Heaven can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is a most accomplished lady."

Don Pacheco pronounced these last words so impressively that Don Felix said to him with a smile: "My friend, I do repent introducing you to Donna Ximena; and if you will take my advice you will go there no more. I tell you so for your own peace of mind. Aurora de Guzman might lead you a dance, and make you fall in love. . . ."

"There is no need to see her again," he broke in, "to fall in love with her; I am so already." "I am sorry for it," replied the pretended Mendoza; "for you are not a man to settle down, and my cousin is not an Isabella, I warn you. She would not encourage a lover whose designs were not honourable." "Not honourable!" replied Don Lewis, "could any man act otherwise with a young lady of her rank? It is an insult to think me capable of behaving in any other way! Know me better, my dear Mendoza. Alas! I should think myself the happiest of men if she could be prevailed on to accept my addresses, and consent to unite her fate with mine."

"Since these are your sentiments," replied Don Felix, "you may command my services. Yes, I sympathise with you. I promise to do my best for you with Aurora, and by to-morrow

I will try to talk my aunt over, who has much influence over her mind." Pacheco returned his best thanks to the gentleman who made him such fair assurances, and we saw with pleasure that our stratagem could not promise more hopefully. On the following day we found the means of increasing the passion of Don Lewis by a new device. My mistress, after going to Donna Ximena, on the pretence of enlisting her on behalf of that gentleman, came back to him. "I have spoken to my aunt," she said, "but I had no little difficulty in gaining her over. She was vastly prepossessed against you. I do not know what made her take you for a rake; but it is certain that some one has given you a bad character. Happily for you, I took your part, and I did this so energetically that I at length succeeded in effacing the bad impression that she had conceived of your morals. Nor is this all," continued Aurora, "I want you to talk to my aunt in my presence, and then we will win her over entirely." Pacheco showed an extreme impatience to converse with Donna Ximena, and this satisfaction was granted him on the following morning. The pretended Mendoza took him to Donna Ortiz, and the three of them had a conversation, in which Don Lewis betrayed that, in so short a time, he had become deeply enamoured. The artful Ximena pretended to be moved by the tenderness he

displayed, and promised Don Lewis to do all she could to induce her niece to marry him. Pacheco threw himself at the feet of so good an aunt to thank her for her kindness. Thereupon Don Felix asked whether his cousin was up. "No," replied the duenna, "she is still in bed; so you cannot see her now; but if you will call again this afternoon you shall converse with her at leisure." This reply of Mistress Ximena increased the joy of Don Lewis, as you may imagine, and he thought the rest of the morning very long. He went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who took no little pleasure in scrutinizing him, and in observing in him all the manifestations of genuine love.

They spoke of nothing but Aurora, and when they had finished dinner, Don Felix said to Pacheco: "A thought has just struck me. Suppose I go to my aunt's a few minutes before you; I can then talk to my cousin privately, and discover, if possible, if she has any inclination for you." Don Lewis approved the suggestion; he let his friend depart, and did not follow him till an hour later. My mistress made such good use of her time that she was dressed like a lady when her lover arrived. "I thought," said the gentleman, after having paid his respects to Aurora and to the duenna, "I thought I should find Don Felix here." "You will see him presently," replied Donna Ximena; "he is writing in my

room." Pacheco seemed satisfied with this excuse, and began to converse with the ladies. Meanwhile, in spite of the presence of the beloved object, he noticed that the hours passed away without Mendoza appearing; and as he could not help manifesting some surprise, Aurora suddenly changed countenance, began to laugh, and said to Don Lewis: "Is it possible you have not yet the least suspicion of the trick which has been practised on you? Can a flaxen wig and dyed eyebrows make me so different from myself, that you have been thus mistaken? Disabuse yourself, then, Pacheco," she continued, resuming an air of gravity, "learn that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Guzman are but one and the same person."

She was not content with undeceiving him; she confessed the attraction she had felt towards him, and detailed all the steps she had taken to effect what she desired. Don Lewis was no less charmed than surprised by what he had heard. He threw himself at my mistress's feet, and said to her in a transport of joy: "Ah, beautiful Aurora, am I really to believe that I am the happy mortal to whom you have shown so much kindness? What can I do to acknowledge it? A whole life of affection can never sufficiently repay it." These words were followed by a thousand other tender and impassioned speeches, after which the lovers spoke of the measures necessary to be taken in



order to attain their desires. It was resolved that we should all leave at once for Madrid, where we might conclude our comedy by a marriage. This plan was almost as soon executed as conceived; Don Lewis, a fortnight later, was united to my mistress, and their wedding was celebrated with endless entertainments and rejoicings.

CHAPTER VII.

GIL BLAS LEAVES HIS PLACE, AND GOES INTO THE
SERVICE OF DON GONZALES DE PACHECO.

THREE weeks after marriage, my mistress, desiring to recompense the services I had rendered her, made me a present of a hundred pistoles, and said to me: "Gil Blas, my lad, I do not intend to dismiss you; you are at liberty to stay here as long as you please; but an uncle of my husband, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, would like to have you for his valet. I have given you so excellent a character that he told me I should greatly oblige him if I consented to part with you. He is a nobleman of the old school," she added, "a man of very high character; and you will be quite comfortable with him."

I thanked Aurora for all her kindness, and as

she had no more need of my services, I accepted the place she offered me, all the more willingly because I should not be quitting the family. I, therefore, went one morning with the compliments of my newly married mistress to Don Gonzales. He was still in bed, though it was almost noon. When I entered his room I found him taking some soup, which a page had just brought him. The old gentleman had his moustache in curl-papers, his eyes were almost lustreless, and his face was pallid and emaciated. He was one of those old bachelors who have been very wild in their youth, and who are scarcely any wiser in their old age. He received me very affably, and said that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had served his niece, I might rely on being made very comfortable. On this assurance I promised to show him the same attachment which I had manifested for her ; and he forthwith received me into his service.

Here I was, then, under a new master ; and Heaven knows what sort of a master ! When he got out of bed I thought I beheld the resurrection of Lazarus ! Imagine a tall body, so dried up that when it had no clothes on, a man could have easily studied osteology on it ! His legs were so thin that they still seemed very spindleshanked after he had put on three or four pairs of stockings one over the other. Moreover, this living skeleton was asthmatic,

and coughed at every word that he uttered. He began by taking chocolate. Then he asked for pen, ink and paper, wrote a note, sealed it, and sent it to its address by the page who had brought him his soup. Next, turning to me, he said: "My lad, henceforth I mean to entrust you with my commissions, and especially those which relate to Donna Euphrasia. This lady is a young person whom I love, and by whom I am tenderly beloved."

"Good Heaven!" I said to myself; "how can young men help thinking that they are loved when this old dotard imagines he is adored!" "Gil Blas," he pursued, "I shall take you to her house this very day; I sup there almost every evening. You will behold a very amiable lady, and be charmed by her modest and reserved manner. Far from resembling those little madcaps who fancy none but young fellows, and are taken by appearances only, her understanding is already mature and judicious; she looks for affection in a man, and prefers to the most captivating exterior a lover who knows how to love." Don Gonzales did not limit the panegyric of his mistress to these remarks; he tried also to show that she was an abstract of all perfections; but he had a listener who was difficult to persuade in this respect. After all the tricks I had seen played by actresses, I did not take it for granted that old noblemen were very happy

in their amours. However, to fall in with him, I pretended to believe all that my master said. I did more; I extolled the discernment and good taste of Donna Euphrasia; and was even impudent enough to maintain that she could not have selected a gallant more worthy of being loved. The simpleton did not perceive that I was flattering him fulsomely; on the contrary he applauded my remarks: so true is it that a flatterer may risk everything with the great; they swallow the most outrageous adulation.

The old man, after he had written his letter and pulled out a few hairs from his beard with a pair of tweezers, bathed his eyes, so as to remove the rheum of which they were full. He also cleaned his ears, and washed his hands; and, when he had performed all his ablutions, dyed his moustache, his eyebrows, and his hair black. He was longer over his toilet than an old dowager trying to conceal the ravages of time. Just as he was finishing dressing, in came another old gentleman, one of his friends, the Count of Asumar. What a difference there was between them. This latter made no secret of his grey locks, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to plume himself on his old age, instead of trying to appear young. "Señor Pacheco," he said as he entered, "I have come to dine with you." "You are welcome, Count," replied my master, whereupon they embraced

each other, sat down, and began to converse until dinner was served.

Their discourse turned first upon a bull-fight, which had taken place a few days ago. They spoke of the cavaliers who had displayed the greatest skill and vigour; and thereupon the old Count, like another Nestor, to whom all present events suggested the praise of the past, said with a sigh: "Alas! now-a-days I see no men fit to be compared with those I used to see; the tournaments are also no longer carried out with the magnificence that was displayed in my young days." I laughed to myself at the good Count of Asumar's prejudice, which was not confined to tournaments. I remember that, when the dessert was set upon the table, he noticed some very fine peaches. "In my time," he said, "the peaches were much larger than they now are; nature degenerates every day." In that case, said I, smiling to myself, the peaches in Adam's time must have been of a marvellous circumference!

The Count of Asumar stayed till it was quite evening. My master had no sooner got rid of him than he left the house, telling me to follow him. We went to Euphrasia, who lived within a stone's throw from our house, in very handsome apartments. She was tastefully dressed, and looked so young that I thought her under age, though she was thirty at least.

She might be considered pretty, and I soon had reason to admire her intelligence. She was not one of those women who only can chatter and are very free and easy in their manner; she was as modest in her behaviour as in her speech, and expressed herself with a great deal of wit, without seeming to think herself witty. I looked at her with much astonishment. "Heavens!" I said, "is it possible that a person who shows herself so reserved is capable of taking to vicious courses for a livelihood?" I fancied that all ladies of her profession must be shameless; I was, therefore, astonished to find one so modest in appearance; and did not consider that these creatures can suit and accommodate themselves to the characters of the rich men and nobles who fall into their hands. If these paymasters desire excitement, then a lively and forward manner is assumed; if they prefer reserve, a prudent and virtuous demeanour is forthcoming. These women are, in fact, cameleons, who change colour according to the humour and the disposition of the men whom they attract.

Don Gonzales was not one of these noble-men who prize bold beauties; he could not endure such, and in order to touch his heart a woman should have the manner of a vestal virgin. Euphrasia, therefore, acted accordingly, and proved that all good performers are not on the stage. I left my master with his nymph,

and went down to a room, where I found an old waiting woman, whom I recognised as a maid who had formerly been in the service of an actress. She also remembered me, and we acted a little scene of recognition worthy to be incorporated into a comedy. "What, is it you, Señor Gil Blas!" said the waiting woman, in a transport of joy; "you have left Arsenia, then, as I have left Constantia?" "Certainly," I replied; "I left her long ago; and have since then been in the service of a young lady of rank. The life actresses lead is hardly to my taste. I came away of my own accord, without condescending to give the slightest explanation to Arsenia." "You did right," rejoined the maid, whose name was Beatrix: "I did pretty much the same with Constantia. One fine morning I coolly gave in my accounts; she took them without uttering a syllable, and so we parted without the least ceremony."

"I am quite delighted," said I, "that we meet again in a more creditable house. Donna Euphrasia seems to me a lady of position, and I think she must be very kind." "You are not mistaken," replied the ancient waiting woman. "She is of a good family, as you can see by her manners; and as for her temper, I can assure you that there never was a more even one, nor a sweeter. She is not one of those termagant, troublesome mistresses who find fault with everything, are always crying out and

worrying their servants, and whose service is, in fact, a hell upon earth. I have never heard her yet scold once—she is so gentle. When by chance I do not do a thing as she likes, she reproves me without anger, and none of these words escape her which violent ladies are so free of.” “My master,” I replied, “is also very gentle: he is not haughty with me, and treats me as an equal, rather than as a servant. In a word, he is one of the best of men, so that you and I are in this respect much better off than we were when we lived with the actresses.” “A thousand times better,” replied Beatrix; “my life used to be all bustle, whilst now I live in peace and quietness. No other man comes here except Don Gonzales; I shall see no one but you in my solitude, and I am glad of it. For a long time I have cherished an affection for you, and I more than once envied the happiness of Laura in having you for a friend; but I hope in time to be as happy as she was. If I possess neither her youth nor her beauty, yet to make up for it I hate gallantry, which a man can never be too grateful for; for I am as faithful as a turtle-dove.”

As honest Beatrix was one of those females who are obliged to offer their favours, because no man would ever ask for them, I was in no way tempted to profit by her advances. However, I would not let her see that I despised her, and was even polite enough to speak to

her in such a manner as not to deprive her of all hope of inducing me to love her. I fancied then that I had made a conquest of an old waiting woman ; but I was deceived on this occasion also. The maid did not treat me thus merely for my charms ; her plan was to make me love her in order to enlist me in her mistress's interests, being so zealous in her service that she did not care what it might cost her. I found out my mistake the very next morning when I took a love letter to Euphrasia from my master. The lady received me courteously, and made a thousand pretty speeches, in which her maid also joined. Whilst one admired my countenance the other remarked in me an air of sagacity and prudence. According to them Don Gonzales possessed a treasure in me. In a word, they praised me so much that I fought shy of the flattery they bestowed upon me. Their motive was obvious, but I pretended to receive it with all the simplicity of a fool ; and by this counter-plot I deceived the hussies, who finally dropped their masks.

“Hark you, Gil Blas,” said Euphrasia, “it depends on yourself to make your fortune. Let us help each other, my friend. Don Gonzales is old, and so infirm that the slightest fever, assisted by a good physician, may carry him off. Let us use the little time that remains to him, and contrive so that he shall leave me the bulk of his property. You shall have

your share of it, I promise you ;* and you may depend on this promise as much as if I were making it before all the notaries of Madrid.” “Madam,” I replied, “you may command your servant. You have but to tell me how you would have me behave, and you shall be satisfied.” “Well,” she answered, “you must watch your master, and give me an account of all his doings. When you converse together, be sure and let the conversation fall upon women ; and then take an opportunity, skillfully, to speak all the good you can of me. Keep his mind fixed on Euphrasia as much as possible. This is not all I ask of you, my friend ; I advise you to keep a wary eye on all that is going on in the Pacheco family. If you perceive that any relative of Don Gonzales is very attentive to him, and is aiming at being his heir, tell me of it at once. I ask no more ; I shall make him founder in less than no time. I have studied the different characters of all your master’s relatives ; I know how to draw them so as to make them ridiculous ; I have already sufficiently prejudiced him against all his nephews and cousins.”

From these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I judged her to be one of those ladies who fasten themselves like leeches on generous old men. Not long before, she had induced Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the price of which she had received. Not a day

passed but she got some valuable articles of dress or furniture from him, and besides this she hoped to be remembered in his will. I pretended to undertake readily all that she desired; and, if I must conceal nothing, I admit that I hesitated, on my way home, whether I would help to deceive my master, or take it in hand to separate him from his mistress. This last plan seemed to be the honester, and I felt more inclined to do my duty than to betray it. Besides, Euphrasia had promised me nothing definite, and to this, perhaps, was owing that she did not corrupt my fidelity. I therefore resolved to serve Don Gonzales with zeal, and persuaded myself that, if I should be fortunate enough to wean him from his idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action than for the bad ones that I might perform.

To attain my purpose I showed myself entirely devoted to Donna Euphrasia's service. I made her believe that I was always talking of her to my master, and then I plied her with fables which she took for the truth. I insinuated myself so thoroughly into her good graces that she thought me completely in her interests. The better still to impose on her, I affected to be in love with Beatrix, who, delighted at her age to receive the attentions of a young man, hardly cared whether she was deceived or not, so long as I deceived her pleasantly. When

my master and I were with our princesses, we were like two different pictures of the same school. Don Gonzales, withered and haggard as I have represented him, looked like a man in the agonies of death whilst he was ogling his mistress; and my lady-love, the more impassioned I appeared, assumed the more childish manners, and practised all the artifices of an aged coquette, which she had been learning these forty years at least. She had finished her education in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry who can please even in their old age, and die laden with the spoils of two or three generations.¹

It was not enough for me to go every evening with my master to Euphrasia's; I occasionally went there alone in the day, and always expected to find some young lover concealed in the house; but at whatever hour I went, I never met a man, nor even a woman of suspicious appearance. I could not discover the least trace of infidelity, which astonished me not a little; for though Beatrix had assured me that her mistress received no male visitor, I could not believe that such a pretty lady was strictly faithful to Don Gonzales. This opinion, of a truth, was not formed rashly; for the

¹ This may perhaps have applied to Ninon de L'Enclos, a "heroine of gallantry," who died in 1705, at the age of ninety, and to whom, it was reported, a similar adventure happened as that told by Lesage in the history of Valerio de Luna and Inesilla, in the first chapter of the eighth book of *Gil Blas*.



fair Euphrasia, as will presently be seen, in order to await more patiently the inheritance of my master, had provided herself with a lover more suited to a woman of her age.

One morning I was taking, as usual, a love-letter to this lady. While I was in her room I saw the feet of a man peeping out from under some hangings. I took care not to give a sign that I had perceived them, and as soon as I had performed my commission I went away, without pretending to have observed anything. But though there was little in this to surprise me, and though it was none of my business, I could not help being greatly moved by it. "Ah!" exclaimed I, indignantly, "perfidious, wicked Euphrasia! Not satisfied with imposing upon a silly old gentleman, by persuading him that you love him, you must give yourself to another, to crown your treachery!" I was a fool, I can see so now, to reason in such a fashion. I ought rather to have laughed at this occurrence, and to have regarded it as a compensation for the weariness and tedium which she must have felt in her connexion with my master. At all events I would have done better not to have said a word about it than to take such an opportunity of playing the good servant. But instead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into Don Gonzales' interests, and gave him a faithful report of what I had seen; and I even added

that Euphrasia had tried to seduce me. I concealed nothing of what she had said to me, so that it was his own fault if he was now not perfectly acquainted with the character of his mistress. He put a few questions to me as though he did not quite believe what I had told him, but my answers were such as to deprive him of the satisfaction of being able to doubt me. He was affected, in spite of his usual equanimity, and a slight flush of anger on his face seemed to forebode that the lady would not be unfaithful to him with impunity. "Enough, Gil Blas," said he; "I am very much obliged to you for your attachment to me, and your fidelity pleases me. I shall go at once to Euphrasia's, overwhelm her with reproaches, and break with the ungrateful creature." Hereupon, he actually went out to go to her house, and dispensed with my attendance, to spare me the awkward part I should have had to play during their explanation.

I awaited my master's return with the utmost impatience. I did not doubt that having so good a reason to complain of his nymph, he would come back weaned from her charms, or at least resolved to forswear them. In this belief I congratulated myself on my work. I pictured the pleasure of the natural heirs of Don Gonzales when they should learn that their relative was no longer the sport of a

passion, so hostile to their interests. I flattered myself that they would not forget me, and that I was, in short, to be distinguished from other servants, who are usually more inclined to encourage their masters in debauchery than to withdraw them from it. I liked a good name, and I thought with pleasure that I should pass for the Coryphæus of servants; but this agreeable notion was dispersed a few hours afterwards. My master came home, and said to me, "My lad, I have just had a very brisk conversation with Euphrasia; I called her an ungrateful and perfidious woman, and overwhelmed her with reproaches. Do you know what she replied? That I was wrong to listen to servants. She maintains that you have trumped up a cock and bull story. If I am to believe her, you are but an impostor, a hireling in the pay of my nephews, for whose sake you would use every means to make me quarrel with her. I saw tears, real tears, trickle from her eyes. She has sworn to me, by all she holds most sacred, that she never made overtures to you, and that she never sees any other man besides myself. Beatrix, who seems to be a good sort of girl, incapable of telling a falsehood, has told me the same story; so that, in spite of myself, I became pacified."

"What, Sir!" I broke in, sorrowfully, "do you doubt my sincerity? Do you mistrust . . ."

“No, my lad,” he in his turn interrupted; “I will do you justice. I do not think you are in league with my nephews; I am persuaded that my interest alone inspires you, and I am much obliged to you for it; but after all, appearances are deceitful. Perhaps you did not really see what you thought you did, and in that case judge how your accusation must vex Euphrasia! Be that as it may, she is a woman whom I cannot help loving. It is my fate. I must even make her the sacrifice which she demands of my love; and that sacrifice is to dismiss you. I am sorry for it, my poor Gil Blas,” he continued, “and I assure you that I only consented to it most unwillingly; but I could not act otherwise. Pity my weakness. You may comfort yourself that I shall not send you away unrewarded. Moreover, I mean to get you a place with a lady of my acquaintance, where you will have a very pleasant time of it.”

I was not a little mortified to find my zeal thus turned against me. I cursed Euphrasia, and deplored the weakness of Don Gonzales, to be so infatuated with her. The kind hearted old gentleman quite felt that, by sending me away merely to please his mistress, he was not doing a very manly thing; so, to make up for his weakness and to gild the pill, he gave me fifty ducats, and took me next day to the house of the Marchioness de Chaves, whom he

told in my hearing that I was a young man without any bad qualities; that he liked me, and that, as family reasons prevented him from keeping me in his service, he should feel very much obliged if she would admit me into hers. She forthwith received me amongst her servants; so that I found myself all at once in a new place.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHARACTER OF THE MARCHIONESS DE CHAVES,
AND WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE USUALLY VISITED HER.

THE Marchioness de Chaves was a widow of thirty-five, handsome, tall, and of good figure. She enjoyed an income of ten thousand ducats, and had no children. I never saw a more solemn-looking woman, nor one who spoke less. That did not prevent her from being considered the cleverest lady in Madrid. The crowds of persons of rank and men of letters that were to be found at her house every day, perhaps contributed more than her own merits to this reputation. But that is a question which I shall not decide. Let it suffice to say that her name conveyed an idea of superior genius, and that her house was called, in town, pre-eminently the Court of Criticism.¹

¹ In the original *le bureau des ouvrages d'esprit*. It is said that Lesage wished to portray in the Marchioness de Chaves and her visitors, the Marchioness de Lambert and her friends.

In point of fact, people used to read there, day after day, dramatic pieces and other poetic effusions. As a rule they were serious compositions; humorous pieces were despised. The best comedy or the most ingenious and lively novel was considered as a weak effort, unworthy of praise; whilst the slightest work of a serious kind, an ode, an eclogue, a sonnet, passed for the grandest effort of the human mind. It often happened that the public did not confirm the judgment of this Court; indeed it was sometimes impolite enough to hiss the very pieces which had been much applauded there.

I was chamberlain in this house; that is, my duty consisted in preparing everything in my mistress's apartments for the reception of the company, in placing chairs for the gentlemen and cushions for the ladies: after which I took my station at the door of the room, to announce and introduce the visitors as they arrived. On the first day, as I showed them in, the head of the pages, who happened to be in the antechamber at the time, pleasantly described them to me. His name was Andrew Molina. He was naturally cool and satirical, and was not without intelligence. The first comer was a bishop. I announced him; and as soon as he had gone in Molina said:—"That prelate is a very curious character. He has some little influence at Court; but he would like people to believe that he has a very great deal. He

offers his services to everyone, and assists nobody. One day he met at Court a gentleman who bowed to him. He laid hold of him, overwhelmed him with civilities, and said, pressing his hand:—‘I am entirely at your lordship’s service. I beg you will put me to the proof. I shall not be satisfied if I do not find an opportunity of obliging you.’ The gentleman thanked him with a great show of gratitude; but when they were at some distance from one another the prelate said to one of his attendants, ‘I fancy I know that man. I have a dim recollection that I have seen him somewhere.’”

Soon after the bishop, appeared the son of a nobleman of high rank. After I had ushered him into my mistress’s room, Molina said to me:—“That nobleman is also an original in his way. I assure you he often enters a house in order to speak to the master of it on some important subject, and leaves without once remembering to touch upon it. But,” he added, as he saw two ladies arriving, “here come Donna Angela de Peñafiel and Donna Margarita de Montalvan, two ladies between whom there is not the smallest resemblance. Donna Margarita prides herself on being a philosopher; she will dispute with the most learned doctors of Salamanca, and her arguments are never overthrown by their reasonings. As for Donna Angela, she does not

affect to be a learned lady, though she has a cultivated mind. Her conversation is sensible, her thoughts are refined, her expressions are delicate, noble, and natural." "This latter portrait is delightful," I said to Molina; "but the other, I think, is scarcely commendable in the fair sex." "Hardly," he replied with a smile; "there are even plenty of men whom it renders ridiculous. The Marchioness, our mistress," he continued, "is also more or less bitten with philosophy.¹ There will be fine chopping of logic here to-day! Heaven grant that religion be not brought up!"

As he finished speaking in came a withered-looking man, who seemed grave and morose. My companion did not spare him. "This man," he said, "is one of those pompous wits who pass for great geniuses, thanks to their silence, or to a few sentences out of Seneca, and who are only fools when you come to examine them closely." Next, there came a rather handsome gentleman, who looked like a Greek, that is to say with plenty of self-sufficiency. I inquired who he was. "He is a dramatic poet," said Molina. "He has written a hundred thousand verses in his lifetime, which never brought him in twopence; but on

¹ The original has *un peu grippée de philosophie*. It was the fashion in Lesage's time to use the word *grippé*, for "being smitten or bitten;" but it is now scarcely ever employed.

the other hand he has secured a considerable income with six lines of prose.”¹

I was about to enquire how a fortune could be made so easily, when I heard a great noise on the stairs. “Hallo!” exclaimed Molina, “here comes the licentiate Campanario. He announces himself before appearing. He begins talking at the street door, and keeps it up until he leaves the house.” In good sooth, the whole house re-echoed with the voice of the noisy licentiate, who at length entered the ante-chamber with a bachelor of his acquaintance, and who never ceased speaking as long as his visit lasted. “Señor Campanario,” I said to Molina, “is apparently a great genius.” “Yes,” replied Molina, “he sometimes hits upon some brilliant remarks and quaint expressions; he is amusing. But, besides being a reckless talker, he is continually repeating himself; and, in fact, to sum him up, I think that the funny and comical tone with which he says everything constitutes its greatest merit. The best of his jokes would not do much credit to a jest-book.”

Other visitors came, of whom Molina gave me amusing sketches. He did not forget to limn the marchioness for me, and her portrait was to my taste. “Our mistress,” he said,

¹ All these originals, as described by Molina, were well-known living characters when Lesage wrote, but the key to their identity is lost.

“has a fairly balanced mind, in spite of her philosophy. Her temper is very even, and her servants have few whims to put up with. Of all the ladies of rank I know, she is the most reasonable; indeed, she scarcely knows what passion is. She has no taste for gambling, nor yet for gallantry, and delights in nothing but in conversation. Her life would be very wearisome to most ladies.” Molina’s character of my mistress prepossessed me in her favour. Nevertheless, a few days later I could not help suspecting that she was not so inimical to love, and I am going to tell you on what I based this suspicion.

One morning, whilst she was at her toilet, there came to our house a little man of about forty, forbidden in aspect, dirtier than Pedro de Moya, the author, and very hump-backed into the bargain. He told me he wished to speak to the marchioness. I asked him on whose business he had come. “On my own,” he replied, haughtily. “Tell her that I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday to Donna Anna de Velasco.” I took him to my mistress’s room and gave in his name. The marchioness immediately exclaimed in a transport of joy, “let him come in.” She not only received him courteously but sent all her maids out of the room; so that the little hump-back, more fortunate than any decent man, remained alone with her. The servants

and I laughed a little over this pretty private interview, which lasted nearly an hour; after which my mistress dismissed the hump-back, with a civility which showed that she was very well satisfied with him.

In fact she had received so much pleasure from his conversation that she said to me privately the same evening:—"Gil Blas, when the gentleman with the hump-back comes again, you may show him up to my room as privately as you can." I confess that this order inspired me with strange suspicions; but I did as I was commanded; and when the little man returned, which was the very next morning, I took him by a private staircase to my lady's chamber. I did the same thing religiously twice or thrice, and concluded that either the marchioness had a very queer taste, or that the hump-back acted as a go-between.

"Upon my word," I said, prepossessed with this idea, "if my mistress is in love with some handsome man, I might forgive her; but, to say the truth, if she is enamoured of this ape, I cannot excuse such a depraved taste." How ill I judged of my mistress! The little hump-back dabbled in magic; and as his skill had been extolled to the marchioness, who was very apt to believe such impostors, she held private conferences with him, in which he showed her things in a crystal, taught her

to turn a sieve,¹ and revealed for money all the mysteries of the cabala. In other words, and to give that man his true character, he was a rogue who lived at the expense of over credulous people, and who was said to have levied contributions from several ladies of quality.²

CHAPTER IX.

AN INCIDENT WHICH LED TO GIL BLAS LEAVING
THE MARCHIONESS OF CHAVES, AND WHAT
NEXT BECAME OF HIM.

FOR six months I lived with the marchioness of Chaves, and was well pleased with my situation. But my fate did not allow me to make a longer stay with this lady, nor even in Madrid. The following adventure obliged me to leave her.

Amongst my mistress's maids was one named Portia. Not only was she young and

¹ An ancient method of discovering a robbery, already mentioned by Theocritus in his *Idylls*, was by balancing a sieve on shears, which spun round when the thief's name was uttered. Ben Jonson in his *Alchemist* (ii.) also speaks of "searching for things lost with a sieve and shears."

² During the latter years of the reign of Louis XIV., it was usual for ladies of quality to consult so-called magicians and fortune-tellers.

pretty, but I thought her of so amiable a character that I became attached to her, without knowing that I should have to dispute her heart with a rival. The secretary of the marchioness, a proud and jealous man, was smitten with my fair friend. He no sooner observed my love than, without trying to discover how Portia fancied me, he resolved to challenge me, and made an appointment with me to meet me on a certain morning in a secluded spot. As he was a little man who scarcely came up to my shoulders, and apparently of a very weak frame, I did not think him a very dangerous rival; so I went confidently to the spot appointed. I made sure of an easy victory, and of thus gaining credit with Portia; but the result did not answer my expectations. The little secretary, who had been practising for two or three years at a fencing-school, disarmed me as though I had been a child, and presenting the point of his sword at my breast, said:—"Prepare to receive your death-thrust, or else give me your word of honour that you will quit the service of the marchioness of Chaves this very day, and will think no more of Portia." I willingly made him this promise, and kept it without reluctance. I was loth to appear before the servants after having been worsted, and especially before the lovely Helen who had been the cause of our combat. I only re-

turned to the house to take all my clothes and my money, and on that same day set out for Toledo, with my purse pretty well lined, and my wearing apparel in a bundle on my back. Though I had not promised to give up living in Madrid, I thought I might as well go away, at all events for a few years. I resolved to make the tour of Spain, and to rest a while at one town and then at another. "My ready money," I said, "will carry me a long way; I shall not spend it extravagantly, and when I have none left I can but go back into service. A young fellow like me will find plenty of places whenever he chooses to look for them; I shall only have to select one."

I was particularly anxious to see Toledo; and after a three days' journey I arrived there. I went to lodge at a good inn, where I was taken for a gentleman of some importance; thanks to my suit in which I formerly used to carry on intrigues, and which I did not fail to put on; and to the foppish manners which I assumed. I could, had I wished, have become acquainted with some pretty women who dwelt in the neighbourhood; but having learned that one must begin by spending a great deal of money with them, I restrained my inclination; and feeling still a great desire to travel, after I had seen all that was worth seeing in Toledo, I left that city one morning at dawn, and took the road to Cuença, intend-

ing to go on to Arragon. On the second day I entered an inn by the roadside; and just as I had sat down to refresh myself in came a company of soldiers belonging to the Holy Brotherhood. These gentlemen called for wine, and began drinking; and I heard them over their cups give a description of a young man whom they said they had orders to arrest. "The gentleman," said one of them, "is not above twenty-three; he has long black hair, is rather tall, has an aquiline nose, and rides a bay horse."

I listened to them without seeming to pay any attention to what they were saying; and indeed I scarcely felt an interest in it. I left them in the inn, and went on my way. I had hardly gone a mile when I met a handsome young gentleman mounted on a bay horse. "Upon my word," I said to myself, "this is the identical man of whom the officers are in search, or I am much mistaken. He has long black hair and an aquiline nose, and is certainly the person they want to catch. I must do him a good turn."

"Sir," said I, "permit me to ask you if you have not some affair of honour on hand?" The young gentleman, without returning any answer, looked at me and seemed startled at my question. I assured him that it was not from mere curiosity I had spoken to him; and he was convinced of it when I told him all I had

overheard in the inn. "Generous stranger," said he to me, "I will not deny to you that I have reason to believe it is actually I of whom these officers are in quest; so I will take another road to avoid them." "In my opinion," I replied, "we should look for a place where you may be safe, and where we can take refuge from a storm I see brewing, and which will burst soon." At that moment we perceived and made for an avenue of somewhat leafy trees, which led to the foot of a mountain, where there was a hermitage.

There was a large and deep grotto which time had hollowed in the mountain side, and to which the hand of man had added a sort of portico formed of pebbles and shells, and covered all over with turf. The adjacent ground was studded with a thousand different flowers which perfumed the air; and close to the grotto from a small fissure in the mountain flowed a babbling spring, which took its course through the neighbouring meadows. At the entrance to this solitary dwelling stood a venerable hermit who seemed to be sinking under the weight of years. He supported himself on a staff which he held in one hand; and with the other he grasped a rosary of large beads, composed of twenty rows at least.¹ His head was covered with a brown woollen hood, with long ears, and his beard,

¹ The beads of a rosary are divided into tens by a bead larger than the rest, that they may be more easily counted.





whiter than snow, fell down to his waist. We advanced towards him. "Father," I said, "will you allow us to ask of you a shelter against the threatening storm?" "Enter, my children," replied the anchorite, after closely examining me; "this hermitage is at your service, and you can stay here as long as you like. As for your horse," he added, pointing to the portico, "it will do very well there." The gentleman who was with me led his horse in, and we followed the old man into the grotto.

Scarcely had we entered when there came down a heavy shower, accompanied by terrific thunder and lightning. The hermit went down on his knees before an image of Saint Pacomo,¹ which was fixed against the wall, and we followed his example. Presently the thunder ceased. We rose; but as the rain continued, and the night was not far off, the old man said to us: "My children, I would not advise you to resume your journey in this weather, unless your business is pressing." We replied with one consent that we had none which would prevent our stopping; and that, if we were not afraid of troubling him, we would thank him to let us pass the night in his hermitage. "You will not incommode me,"

¹ St Pacomo was an Egyptian of whom it is said that he walked among serpents unhurt, and that when he had occasion to cross the river Nile, he was transported from one side to the other on the back of a crocodile.

replied the hermit; "you are the only ones to be pitied. You will have a poor bed, and I can offer you nothing but anchorite's fare."

Whilst saying this, the holy personage made us sit down at a little table, and presented us with a few shallots, a crust of bread, and a pitcher of water. He then resumed: "My children, you see my ordinary fare; but to-day I will commit an excess for your sakes." With these words he went and fetched a little cheese, and two handfuls of filberts, which he laid on the table. The young gentleman, who had no great appetite, scarcely did honour to this food. "I can see," the hermit said to him, "that you are accustomed to a better table than mine, or rather that sensuality has vitiated your natural taste. I have been in the world like you. The most delicate meats, the most exquisite dishes were then not too good for me; but since I live in solitude, I have recovered the native purity of my taste. Now I only care for vegetables, fruits, milk; in a word, only for that which was the food of our first parents."

Whilst he was thus speaking, the young man fell into a profound reverie. The hermit perceived it. "My son," he said, "something weighs on your mind. May I not know the cause? Open your heart to me. It is not from curiosity that I press you; charity alone prompts me. I am old enough to give advice, and perhaps you are in a condition to require

it." "Yes, father," replied the gentleman, sighing, "I certainly require advice, and I will follow yours, since you are kind enough to offer it. I think I risk nothing by confiding in such a man as you." "No, my son," said the old man, "you have nothing to fear; every confidence may be placed in me." Then the gentleman told the following story.

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY OF DON ALPHONSO AND OF THE FAIR SERAPHINA.¹

"I SHALL conceal nothing from you, father, nor from this gentleman who listens to me. After the generosity he has displayed I should be wrong to mistrust him. You shall know my misfortunes. I am a native of Madrid, and this is my origin. An officer of the German Guard,² Baron Steinbach by name, returning home one evening, saw a bundle of white linen lying at the foot of his staircase. He took it up and carried it into his wife's apartment, where it

¹ This story is, according to Franceson, taken from *Mas puede amor que la sangre*, by Alonzo del Castillo Solorzano.

² The Kings of Spain, of the house of Austria, had a guard of German soldiers, since Charles the Fifth had been Emperor of Germany.

turned out to be a new-born child, dressed in very good clothes, with a note asserting that it belonged to persons of quality, who would one day make themselves known. It was also stated that it had been christened Alphonso. I am that unhappy infant, and this is all that I know about my birth and parentage. Whether the victim of honour or of faithlessness, I am ignorant if my mother abandoned me only to conceal disgraceful amours, or if, seduced by a treacherous lover, she was compelled by cruel necessity to disown me.

“However it be, the baron and his lady were touched by my condition; and as they had no children of their own, they resolved to bring me up under the name of Don Alphonso. As I grew older their attachment to me increased. My affectionate and engaging manners were always endearing me to them; in short, I was fortunate enough to make them love me. They provided me with teachers of every description. My education became their only care; and, far from being impatient for the time when my parents were to reveal themselves, they seemed, on the contrary, to wish that my birth should always remain a mystery. As soon as the baron thought me old enough to bear arms, he put me into the service, obtained an ensigncy for me, and provided me with a small outfit. The better to incite me to seek opportunities of reaping fame, the baron pointed out to me that

the path of honour was open to all men, and that I could make in war a name all the more glorious because I should owe it to none but myself. At the same time, he revealed the secret of my birth, which had hitherto been concealed from me. As I had passed for his son in Madrid, and had actually believed myself to be so, I confess that this information pained me deeply. I could not then, nor can I even yet, think of it save with shame. The more my feelings seem to assure me I am of noble birth, the more I am mortified at finding myself abandoned by those who are the authors of my being.

“ I went to serve in the Low Countries, but peace was concluded shortly afterwards, and as Spain had no enemies, though many envied her, I returned to Madrid, when I received fresh marks of affection from the baron and his lady. I had been back rather more than two months, when one morning a little page came into my room and presented me with a note couched pretty nearly in these terms : ‘ I am neither ugly nor unshapely, and yet you often see me at my window without glancing at me. This conduct is not in harmony with your gallant appearance, and I am so offended by it that, in revenge, I would fain make you love me.’

“ After reading this note I did not doubt that it came from a widow named Leonora, who

lived opposite to our house, and who had the reputation of being a great coquette. I questioned the little page, and though he at first tried to keep the secret, on my giving him a ducat he satisfied my curiosity. He even undertook to carry back an answer to his mistress, wherein I acknowledged my crime and felt that she was already half avenged.

“I was not insensible to such a conquest. I went out no more on that day, and took care to stand at my window to watch the lady, who did not forget to appear at her own. I made signals to her, which she answered; and next morning she sent me word by her little page that if I would be in the street on the following night, between eleven and twelve, I might converse with her at a window on the ground floor. Though I did not feel greatly enamoured of so forward a widow, I did not fail to send her a very impassioned reply, and awaited night with as much impatience as if I had really been in love. When night came I went for a walk in the Prado until the hour appointed; but I had no sooner arrived there when a man, mounted on a fine horse, suddenly alighted by my side, and addressing me with a peremptory air, said: ‘Sir, are you not the son of Baron Steinbach?’ I replied in the affirmative. ‘Then you are the person,’ he continued, ‘who was to converse with Leonora at her window to-night. I have seen her letters and your replies; her page has

shown them to me, and I have followed you this evening from your house hither to let you know that you have a rival whose pride is hurt by having to dispute the heart of a lady with you. I think I need not say more. We are here in a secluded spot; let us draw, unless to avoid the chastisement in store for you, you promise to break off all intercourse with Leonora. Either sacrifice to me all hopes you may have conceived, or else your life must be the forfeit.' 'You should have requested this sacrifice,' I said, 'and not demanded it. I might perhaps have granted it to your entreaties, but I refuse it to your threats.'

" 'Very well, then,' he said, after having tied his horse to a tree, 'draw then. It is not for a man of my rank to demean himself by entreating a man of yours. Most nobles, if they had been in my place, would have revenged themselves in a less honourable manner.' I was irritated by these words, and as he drew his sword I drew mine. We fought with such fury that the combat did not last long. Whether he attacked too eagerly, or whether I was more skilful, he soon received a mortal thrust; I saw him stagger and fall to the ground. Then, thinking only of escape, I mounted my antagonist's horse and took the road to Toledo. I dared not return to Baron Steinbach's house, being sure that my adventure would only sadden him; and when I pictured the peril I was in,

I thought I could not get away from Madrid too quickly.

“Engaged in these most melancholy reflections, I travelled onwards during the rest of the night and all the next morning. But towards noon I was obliged to stop to let my horse take a rest, and to avoid the heat, which had become unbearable. I stayed in a village until nightfall; after which, desiring to go on without delay to Toledo, I continued my journey. I had already gone two leagues beyond Illescas, when, about midnight, a storm like that of to-day overtook me in the open country. I rode up to a garden wall at some little distance, and finding no more convenient shelter, stationed myself with my horse at the end of the wall, near the door of a summer-house, and under a balcony. As I was leaning against the door I felt that it was open, which I set down to the negligence of the servants. Having dismounted, less from curiosity than for the sake of being better sheltered from the rain, which had been very troublesome under the balcony, I entered the ground floor of the summer-house, leading my horse after me.

“So long as the storm lasted I confined myself to observing the place where I was; and though I could judge of it only by the flashes of lightning, it was very evident that such a house could not belong to persons of an inferior rank. I only waited for the rain to cease that I might

continue my journey ; but a great light which I saw at some distance made me change my resolution. Leaving my horse in the summer-house, of which I took care to shut the door, I advanced towards this light, convinced that some one was still stirring in the house, and determined to request a lodging for the night. After crossing several walks I came to a drawing-room, the door of which was also left open. I entered, and when I had observed all its magnificence by the light of a fine crystal lustre in which several candles were burning, I felt convinced I was in the mansion of some great nobleman. The floor was of marble, the fine wainscot was artistically gilded, the cornices were of admirable workmanship, while the ceiling seemed to have been painted by some of the first artists. But what I took special notice of was a great number of busts of Spanish heroes, set round the room upon jasper pedestals. I had leisure to examine all these things ; for though I listened attentively, from time to time, I heard no noise, and saw no one appear.

“ On one side of the room a door stood ajar ; I partly opened it, and saw a suite of apartments whereof only the furthest was lighted. ‘ What is to be done now ? ’ I asked myself. ‘ Shall I return, or shall I be venturesome enough to advance to that room ? ’ I felt that the most judicious thing would be to retreat ;

but I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny hurried me on. Advancing boldly, I went through the rooms, and reached one where there was a light—to wit, a taper upon a marble table, in a silver-gilt candlestick. The first thing I noticed was the very handsome and elegant summer-furniture; but soon afterwards, casting my eyes upon a bed of which the curtains were partly drawn on account of the heat, I perceived an object which at once engrossed my attention: a young lady, fast asleep in spite of the noise of the thunder which had just been bursting forth. I softly drew near her; and by the light of the taper beheld a complexion and features which dazzled me. My mind was suddenly troubled at this sight. I felt at once agitated and delighted; but whatever feelings disturbed me, the idea that she was of high rank checked every presumptuous thought; and respect prevailed over emotion. Whilst I feasted my eyes with the pleasure of beholding her, she awoke.

“Imagine her surprise at seeing in her room, at midnight, a man who was an utter stranger to her! She trembled on beholding me, and shrieked aloud. I took pains to reassure her, and throwing myself on my knees before her said:—‘Madam, have no fear; I have not come here to harm you.’ I was about to say more; but she was so terrified that she was

incapable of listening to me. She called her women over and over again; but as no one replied she took up a thin dressing-gown which lay at the foot of her bed, rose hastily, and rushed into the rooms through which I had come, still calling her attendants, as well as a younger sister who was under her charge. I expected to see all the servants make their appearance, and I had reason to fear that they would treat me but ill, without hearing what I had to say. Fortunately for me she called in vain; no one came to her cries but an old servant who could not have afforded her much assistance, if she had had anything to fear. Nevertheless, grown a little braver by his presence, she haughtily asked me who I was, and how and why I had the audacity to enter her house. Then I began to justify myself; but I had no sooner told her that I had found the door of the summer-house open, than she cried out: ‘Righteous Heaven! what do I forebode!’

“As she uttered these words she took up the taper from the table, and ran through all the rooms one after another, without finding there either her sister or her maids. She even observed that they had taken away all their clothes. Then her suspicions seemed only too well confirmed, and she came up to me with a great deal of emotion, and said:—‘False man, do not add dissimulation to treachery.

It is not chance which has brought you here. You are a follower of Don Ferdinand de Leyva, and are an accomplice in his crime. But do not think you will escape me; I have still people enough about me to arrest you.' 'Madam,' I answered, 'do not confound me with your enemies. Don Ferdinand de Leyva is a stranger to me. I do not even know who you are. I am an unfortunate man whom an affair of honour has compelled to flee from Madrid; and I swear by all that is most holy, that, had it not been for the storm which overtook me, I should never have come into your house. Entertain, therefore, a more favourable opinion of me. Instead of thinking me an accomplice in the crime which has injured you, believe me rather disposed to avenge you.'

"These last words, and the tone in which I uttered them, appeased the lady, who no longer seemed to regard me as an enemy; but if her anger abated it was only to abandon herself to grief. She began to weep bitterly. Her tears affected me; and I was hardly less moved than she, though I did not yet know the cause of her affliction. I was not content to mingle my tears with hers; impatient to avenge her wrongs, I became possessed by a transport of rage. 'Madam,' I exclaimed, 'what outrage have you received? Let me know it, and I shall espouse your resentment.'

Would you have me pursue Don Ferdinand, and stab him to the heart? Only tell me on whom you would be revenged; and command my services. Whatever perils, whatever misfortunes may be attached to your vengeance, this stranger, whom you thought to be in league with your enemies, will brave them all for your sake.'

"This outburst surprised the lady, and checked her tears. 'Ah, Señor,' she said, 'forgive my suspicion, and ascribe it to the cruel situation in which I am placed. Seraphina is undeceived by such generous sentiments; they even efface the shame that a stranger should witness the insult offered to my family. Yes, noble unknown, I acknowledge my error and do not reject your aid; but I do not require Don Ferdinand to be killed.' 'Well, madam,' I replied, 'of what nature are these services I can render you?' 'Señor,' replied Seraphina, 'this is the cause of my sorrow. Don Ferdinand de Leyva is in love with my sister Julia, whom he met by accident at Toledo, where we usually reside. Three months ago he asked her hand of my father, the Count of Polan, who would not give his consent, on account of an old feud between our families. My sister is not yet fifteen; she must have been indiscreet enough to follow the evil counsels of my waiting-women, whom Don Ferdinand has doubtless gained over. This gentleman, received information of

our being alone in this country house, and has chosen this opportunity for carrying Julia off. I should at least like to know to what place he has removed her, so that my father and brother, who have been these two months in Madrid, may take their measures accordingly. For Heaven's sake,' she added, 'be kind enough to search the neighbourhood of Toledo; try to find out everything about this elopement; and my family will be ever indebted to you.'

"The lady did not imagine that the task which she laid upon me was hardly suitable to a man who could not quit Castile too soon; but how should she think of that, when I did not think of it myself?

"Delighted with the happiness of finding myself necessary to the most lovely creature in the world, I accepted the commission with joy, and promised to fulfil it with as much zeal as diligence. In fact, I did not wait for day-break to set about the accomplishment of my promise; I left Seraphina immediately, beseeching her to forgive me the alarm I had caused her, and assuring her that she should soon hear from me. I went out the same way as I came in; but so much engrossed by the lady that it was not difficult for me to perceive that I was already enamoured of her. I recognised it still more clearly by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and by the lovers' dreams which I nourished. I fancied that Seraphina, though

engrossed by her grief, had observed my budding passion, and that possibly she had not been displeased at the discovery. I even imagined that if I could bring her trustworthy tidings of her sister, and if the business should terminate according to her desires, I should reap all the credit for it."

Here Don Alphonso broke the thread of his story, and said to the aged hermit: "I ask your pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I dwell upon circumstances which must doubtless weary you." "No, son," replied the anchorite, "they do not weary me; I am even glad to know how greatly you were enamoured of the young lady of whom you speak, because I shall regulate my advice accordingly."

The young gentleman resumed: "With my imagination excited by these flattering pictures, I sought for two days the ravisher of Julia; but in spite of all conceivable enquiries it was impossible to discover the least trace of him. Deeply mortified at having gained nothing by my search, I went back to Seraphina, whom I imagined to be in extreme anxiety. However, she was in better spirits than might have been expected. She told me that she had been more fortunate than I, for she knew what had become of her sister. She had received a letter from Don Ferdinand himself, who communicated to her how, after having married Julia privately, he had placed her in a

convent in Toledo. 'I have sent his letter to my father,' continued Seraphina. 'I hope the matter may end amicably, and that a solemn marriage will soon extinguish the animosity which has so long divided our respective families.'

"After the lady had given me this information about her sister's fate, she apologised for the trouble she had caused, and the danger to which she might imprudently have exposed me by asking me to pursue Don Ferdinand, without recollecting that I had told her that an affair of honour had compelled me to take flight. These apologies were couched in the kindest terms; and, as I needed rest, she took me into the drawing-room, where we both sat down. She wore a morning-gown of white taffetas, with black stripes, and a little hat of the same material, with black feathers; which made me think she might be a widow.¹ But she looked so young that I knew not what to think.

¹ Widows in Spain formerly wore dresses of black and white or of grey materials. The Marchioness de Villars, who accompanied her husband to Madrid, where he was French Ambassador in 1668, 1671, and 1672, says in her Letters (Paris, 1868), when speaking of the first visits the Spanish ladies paid to her: "All these ladies were very finely dressed, and decked with many precious stones, except those whose husbands are travelling. One of the prettiest by far was clad in grey for that very reason. During the absence of their husbands they place themselves under the patronage of some saint, and wear with their grey or white dresses little girdles made of ropes or of leather." The Countess d'Aulnoy also describes the peculiar dress of these widows.

“If I longed to know more on this subject, she was no less curious to hear who I was. She besought me to tell her my name, not doubting, as she said, from my noble appearance, and still more from the generous pity which had made me embrace her interests so warmly, that I was of good family. The question was rather perplexing. I blushed and became confused; and I must confess that, thinking it less shame to lie than to speak the truth, I answered that I was the son of Baron Steinbach, an officer of the German guard. ‘Tell me, likewise,’ resumed the lady, ‘why you left Madrid. I promise you beforehand all my father’s influence, as well as that of my brother Don Gaspard. It is the least mark of gratitude which I can show to a gentleman who, in order to serve me, neglected even to care for his own life.’ I made no difficulty of relating to her all the circumstances of my duel; she blamed the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised to interest her whole family in my behalf.

“When I had satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine. I asked her if her hand was free or engaged. ‘Three years ago,’ she replied, ‘my father made me marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have now been a widow these fifteen months.’ ‘Madam,’ I said, ‘what misfortune deprived you so soon of your husband?’ ‘I am going to tell it to you, sir,’

the lady replied, 'in return for the confidence you have just reposed in me. Don Diego de Lara was a very handsome nobleman; but though he entertained a most violent passion for me, and every day, in order to please me, did all that the most tender and assiduous lover could invent to make himself agreeable to the object of his affection, and though he had a thousand good qualities, my heart remained untouched. Love is not always the result either of assiduities or of recognised merits. Alas!' she added, 'we are often captivated at first sight by an utter stranger! Therefore, to love him was not in my power. More embarrassed than charmed by the marks of his tenderness, and compelled to respond to them against my inclination, I secretly accused myself of ingratitude; but I also thought myself much to be pitied. Unfortunately for him and for me, his delicacy was even greater than his love. From my acts and my words he inferred my most secret emotions, and penetrated into the inmost recesses of my heart. He was always complaining of my indifference, and thought himself all the more unfortunate in not being able to please me because he well knew no rival stood in his way; for I was scarcely sixteen; and before offering me his hand he had won over all my women, who had assured him that no one had yet attracted my notice. "Yes, Seraphina,"

he used often to say, "I could have wished that you were prepossessed in favour of another, and that this was the only cause of your indifference to me. My assiduities and your own principles might get the better of such a prepossession; but I despair of ever vanquishing your heart since it has not yielded to all the love I have lavished on you." Wearied of hearing the same speeches repeated, I told him that instead of disturbing his peace and my own by such an excess of feeling, he would do better to trust to the effects of time. In fact at my age I was scarcely able to appreciate the refinements of such a fastidious passion; and that was what Don Diego ought to have considered; but finding that a whole year had gone by without his being more advanced than on the first day, he lost all patience, or rather he became distracted; so, pretending to have important business at court, he departed and went to serve as a volunteer in the Low Countries, where, in the midst of dangers he soon found what he was in search of, namely, the end of his life and of his sufferings.'

"After the lady had ended this narrative, the singular character of her husband formed the subject of our conversation. We were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who brought Seraphina a letter from the Count of Polan. She asked my permission to read it; and I observed that while she perused it she grew

pale and became dreadfully agitated. When she had finished it she raised her eyes towards Heaven, breathed a heavy sigh, and her face was instantly covered with tears. I was deeply affected by her grief; I felt greatly disturbed; and as though I foreshadowed the blow which was about to fall on me, a death-like fear made my blood run cold. ‘Madam,’ I said, in a scarcely audible voice, ‘may I ask you what misfortunes this letter announces?’ ‘Take it, sir,’ Seraphina replied with a sad tone of voice, holding out the letter to me; ‘read yourself what my father has written. Alas! you are only too much interested in it!’

“I shuddered on hearing these words. I took the letter with trembling hands, and read as follows:—‘Don Gaspard, your brother, fought a duel yesterday on the Prado. He received a sword thrust from which he died to-day; and with his last breath he declared that the gentleman who slew him was the son of Baron Steinbach, an officer of the German guard. To add to these misfortunes, the murderer has escaped, and taken flight; but wherever he may have concealed himself I shall spare no pains to discover him. I am about to write to the governors of certain provinces who will not fail to arrest him, if he passes through any of the towns in their jurisdiction; and by means of other letters I

hope to close every road against him.—THE COUNT OF POLAN.’

“You may imagine how this letter confused all my faculties. For some moments I remained motionless, and without the power to speak. In the midst of my despondency I too plainly saw the cruel results that the death of Don Gaspard would have for my passion. I was seized with the most violent despair; I cast myself at Seraphina’s feet, and presenting to her my naked sword, I said :—‘Madam, spare the Count of Polan the trouble of seeking a man who might escape from his resentment. Be yourself the avenger of your brother. Sacrifice his murderer to him with your own hands. Strike! Let this very blade which terminated his life be fatal to his unfortunate adversary!’ ‘Señor,’ Seraphina replied, a little softened by my behaviour, ‘I loved Don Gaspard; though you slew him like a brave man, and he drew his misfortune on himself, you may be assured that I share the resentment of my father. Yes, Don Alphonso, I am your enemy, and I will inflict on you such injuries as the ties of blood and affection require of me; but I will not take advantage of your ill fortune. In vain it has given you up to my vengeance; if honour arms me against you, it forbids me also to avenge myself basely. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and I will not reward by an assassination the service you have

rendered me. Flee; escape if you can from our pursuit and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from the peril which menaces it.'

" 'What, madam?' I replied, 'when vengeance is in your own hands, you entrust it to the laws which may perhaps disappoint your resentment! Nay! rather pierce the heart of a wretch who does not deserve that you should spare him! No, madam, do not treat me so nobly and generously. Do you know who I am? All Madrid believes me to be the son of the Baron Steinbach; yet I am but an unfortunate youth brought up in his house through charity. I am even ignorant who my parents are.' 'No matter,' Seraphina broke in hurriedly, as though my last words had given her new pain, 'though you were the meanest of mankind I would do what honour prescribes.' 'Well, madam,' I said, 'since a brother's death cannot induce you to shed my blood, I will exasperate your hatred by a new offence, the audacity of which I trust you will not excuse. I dote on you; I could not behold your charms without being dazzled by them, and in spite of the obscurity of my lot, I had formed the hope of being united to you. I was sufficiently in love, or rather sufficiently vain to flatter myself that Heaven, which perhaps conceals from me my origin in mercy, might disclose it to me at some future time, and enable me to acquaint you with my real name without blushing. After

this insulting confession, can you still hesitate to punish me?' 'Your rash avowal,' replied the lady, 'would doubtless offend me at another time; but I excuse it on account of your present agitation. Besides, my situation for the nonce so engrosses me, that I attend little to what you say. Once more, Don Alphonso,' she said, shedding some tears, 'flee from a house which you have filled with grief; every moment you remain here increases my distress.' 'I resist your will no longer, madam,' I answered, rising to my feet, 'I must leave you; but do not suppose that, in the hope of preserving a life which is hateful to you, I shall seek a refuge where I may be safe. No, no, I offer it up to your resentment. I shall go and await at Toledo with impatience for the fate which you design for me; and by surrendering myself to my pursuers shall only hasten the end of my misfortunes.'

"With these words I withdrew. My horse was brought out and I betook myself to Toledo, where I remained eight days, and where, indeed, I took so little pains to conceal myself that I do not understand how I have not been arrested; for I cannot believe that the Count of Polan, who is solely bent on barring every means of escape to me, could have overlooked that I was likely to pass through Toledo. I left that town yesterday, where I seemed to grow tired of being at liberty; and without

following any distinct road, came to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to fear. This is what I have on my mind, father; I beseech you to assist me with your advice."

CHAPTER XI.

WHO THE OLD HERMIT WAS, AND HOW GIL BLAS
FOUND HIMSELF AMONG OLD ACQUAINTANCES.

WHEN Don Alphonso had finished this sad narrative of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him:—"Son, you were very imprudent to stay so long in Toledo. I look upon all you have told me with another eye than your own, and your love for Seraphina seems to me sheer madness. Trust me and do not be blinded by passion; you would do well to forget this young lady who can never be yours. Yield with a good grace to the obstacles which separate you from her, and follow your destiny which apparently promises you many fresh adventures. No doubt you will find some other young lady who may make the same impression upon you, and whose brother you have not killed."

He was proceeding to add many other inducements to patience, when we saw a second hermit

enter the cell, carrying a well-filled wallet. The new comer was returning with a plentiful supply of contributions he had been collecting in the town of Cuença. He seemed younger than his companion, and had a red and very bushy beard. "Welcome home, brother Anthony," the old anchorite said to him, "what news do you bring from town?" "Bad enough," replied the red-haired brother, putting into his hands a piece of paper folded like a letter; "this note will give you every information." The old man opened it, and after reading it with the attention it deserved, cried out: "Heaven be praised! Since the plot is discovered we must take some decisive step. Let us change our style," he continued, addressing the young nobleman; "Don Alphonso, you see in me a man, like yourself, the sport of fortune's caprices. Word is sent me from Cuença, a place about a league distant, that some one has been slandering me to the magistrates, whose myrmidons are to set out to-morrow to come to this hermitage to secure my person. But they shall not take the hare in its form. It is not the first time I have been in such a scrape. Thank Heaven! I have nearly always extricated myself as a man of intelligence should. I shall show myself now in another shape; for though you see me as a hermit and an old man, I am neither the one nor the other."

Whilst saying these words he threw off his long robe, and stood forth in a doublet of black serge, with slashed sleeves. Then he removed his cowl, unfastened a string which held up his false beard, and was at once transformed to a man of about eight and twenty or thirty. Brother Anthony, following his example, divested himself of his hermit's dress, undid his red beard, like his companion's, and took out of an old worm-eaten wooden trunk a shabby short cassock, which he put on. But judge of my surprise when I recognised in the old anchorite Señor Don Raphael, and in brother Anthony my very dear and faithful servant Ambrose de Lamela! ¹ "Zounds!" I exclaimed, at once, "it seems that I am amongst acquaintances." "That is true, Señor Gil Blas," said Don Raphael with a laugh, "you find again two of your friends when you least expected it. I admit that you have some cause to complain of us, but let us forget the past, and thank Heaven for bringing us together again. Ambrose and I offer you our services, and they are not to be despised. Do not take us for evil doers; we attack no one; we murder no one; we only seek to live at other people's expense; and if robbery be an unjust act, its necessity atones for its injustice. Join us, and you shall lead a wandering life. It is a very pleasant way of living, when you know how to

¹ See vol i., bk. i. ch. 16.

manage it prudently. And yet, in spite of all our prudence, the chain of indirect causes does occasionally draw us into unlucky adventures. But what of that? We enjoy our lucky ones all the more for it. We are accustomed to change of weather, and to vicissitudes of fortune. Sir knight," continued the pretended hermit, addressing Don Alphonso, "we make you the same proposal; and I think you ought not to reject it considering your present position; for, to say nothing of the affair which renders it necessary for you to hide yourself, you probably have not much money?" "Indeed I have not," said Don Alphonso, "and I confess that that increases my trouble." "Well," replied Don Raphael, "why leave us? you cannot do better than join us. You shall lack nothing, and we will checkmate the pursuit of your enemies. We know almost all Spain, because we have scoured it well; we know the woods, the mountains, and all the places capable of affording protection against the brutalities of the law." Don Alphonso thanked them for their kindness; and being indeed without money, and without resources, he resolved to accompany them. I determined upon the same course, because I did not wish to quit the young gentleman, for whom I felt an increasing attachment.

We all four agreed to set off in a body and not to separate. This decided, we considered

the question whether we should leave at once, or first attack a skin¹ full of excellent wine, which Brother Anthony had brought on from Cuença the day before; but Raphael, who had more experience than any of us, pointed out that we ought first of all to think of our safety, and recommended that we should travel all night to reach a very dense wood between Villardesa² and Almodabar, where we might halt, and, being free from anxiety, spend the day and recruit ourselves. This advice was approved. Then the pretended hermits made up two bundles of all their clothes and provisions, and slung them, duly balanced, across the back of Don Alphonso's horse. They were not long in doing this; after which we departed from the hermitage, leaving as a booty to the officers of justice the two hermits' dresses, the white and the red beard, a couple of pallets, a table, a worthless chest, two old straw-bottomed chairs, and the image of Saint Pacomo.

We walked all night, and were beginning to feel very tired when at break of day we saw the wood to which we were bound. The sight of port instils new vigour in sailors wearied by a long voyage. We took courage, and arrived at the end of our journey before sunrise.

¹ In Spain the wine is transported in large goat skins sewn in the shape of a bag.

² The right name of this place is Villardesaz.

Plunging into the thickest part of the wood, we halted in a very pleasant spot, on a sward surrounded by tall oaks, whose interwoven branches formed a canopy impervious to the heat of the day. We took the saddle and the load from the horse, to let it graze; and then sitting down we pulled out of Brother Anthony's wallet some large hunks of bread, with a goodly number of slices of roast meat, and began to attack them as if in emulation of each other. Nevertheless, keen as our appetite was, we every now and then ceased eating to hug the wine-skin, which passed continually from the arms of one into the arms of another.

Towards the end of the meal Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso: "Señor, after the confidence you have reposed in me, it is but fair that I also should tell you the story of my life with the same sincerity." "I will be delighted to hear it," replied the young man. "And so will I, above anything," exclaimed I. "I am very anxious to hear your adventures, for doubtless they well deserve our attention." "You may be sure of that," replied Raphael, "and I fully intend to commit them to writing one of these days. It shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am still young, and I want to make a large book of them. But we are tired; let us recruit our strength with a few hours' sleep. Whilst we three lie down Ambrose shall keep awake for fear of a surprise,

and presently he shall take a nap in his turn ; for, though I believe we are quite safe here, it is always well for us to be on our guard." After having said these words, he laid down on the grass ; Don Alphonso did the same ; I followed their example, and Lamela acted as our sentinel.

Don Alphonso, instead of going to sleep, lay reflecting on his misfortunes ; and I could not get a wink of sleep. As for Don Raphael, he was soon in slumber. But an hour later he awoke, and seeing us disposed to listen to him, he said to Lamela : " Friend Ambrose, it is your turn now to enjoy a nap." " No, no," replied Lamela, " I do not want to go to sleep ; and though I know all the events of your life, they are so instructive for people in our profession, that I shall be glad to hear them again." Forthwith Don Raphael began the story of his life as follows.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF DON RAPHAEL.

I AM the son of an actress of Madrid, famous for her elocution, and still more so for her gallantries. Her name was Lucinda. As for my father, it would be rash to name any one. I might indeed say that such and such a gentleman of quality was in love with my mother when I came into the world; but then, that mere fact would be no convincing proof that he was the author of my existence. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be relied upon in this respect, that even when she seems most attached to any nobleman, she almost invariably gives him some substitute for his money.

There is nothing like placing oneself above scandal. Lucinda, instead of having me brought up stealthily in her own house, took me with her without ceremony, and introduced me very politely to every one in the theatre, heedless of the speeches made at her expense, and of the malicious smiles which the sight of me continually gave rise to. In short, I became her darling, and was caressed by all the men who frequented her house. One would have

thought that nature pleaded with them in my favour.

I was allowed to spend my first twelve years in all kinds of frivolous amusements, and was barely taught to read and to write ; still less did anyone trouble himself to instruct me in the principles of religion. I merely learned to dance, to sing, and to play the guitar. These were my sole accomplishments when the Marquis of Leganez asked for me, so that I might become the companion of his only son, who was about my own age. Lucinda gladly gave her consent, and it was then that I began to be seriously employed. Young Leganez, that diminutive nobleman, was no further advanced than myself, and did not seem to have any capacity for the sciences, for he scarcely knew a single letter of the alphabet, though he had had a tutor these fifteen months. His other masters succeeded no better ; he tried their patience to the utmost. To be sure, they were not allowed to be strict with him ; their orders were to instruct and not to vex him ; and this order, as well as the bad disposition of the subject, rendered their lessons of little or no effect.

But the tutor, as you shall hear, hit on a most ingenious device for intimidating this young nobleman without disobeying his father's prohibition. He resolved to flog me when little Leganez deserved to be punished, and

did not fail to carry out his resolution. I did not find this device to my taste, ran away, and went to my mother to complain of such unjust treatment. Nevertheless, whatever tenderness she felt for me, she had the strength of mind to resist my tears; and thinking that it was a great advantage for her son to belong to the household of the Marquis of Leganez, she sent me back there immediately. So I was given over to the tutor, who, perceiving that his invention produced a good effect, went on flogging me on account of the young nobleman; and to make the more impression upon him thrashed me very severely. Every day I was sure to pay for young Leganez. I may say that he did not learn a letter of the alphabet but what cost me a hundred lashes, so you can reckon how much his rudiments cost me.

The rod was not the only disagreeable thing I had to put up with in this house. As everybody knew who I was, the meanest servants, down to the very scullions, threw my birth in my teeth. This displeased me so much that one day, after having found means to lay my hands on the tutor's whole stock of ready money, amounting to about a hundred and fifty ducats, I ran away. That was the vengeance I took for the whippings he had so unjustly given me; and I believe I could not have taken one that would hurt him more. I

performed this exploit with much dexterity, although it was my first attempt; and I was clever enough to elude the search which they made for me during two days. I got away from Madrid, and started for Toledo, without finding any one on my track.

I was then just entering in my fifteenth year. What a happy fellow I was to be independent at that age, and master of my own actions! I soon struck up an acquaintance with some young fellows who put a polish on me, and helped me to get through my ducats. I next associated with some sharpers, who cultivated my happy disposition so well that in a little time I became one of the cleverest of the profession. After five years I conceived an inclination to travel. I left my comrades, and wishing to begin my journey in Estremadura, went as far as Alcantara; but before reaching it I found an opportunity of exercising my talents, which I did not allow to escape me. As I was on foot, and moreover burdened with a pretty heavy knapsack, I stopped from time to time to rest under some trees which tempted me by their shade. Once when I had thus left the high road I came across two lads of good family, gaily chattering on the grass and enjoying the cool under the leaves. I saluted them very politely, and entered into conversation with them, which apparently did not displease them. The elder

did not look more than fifteen, and they both seemed very simple. "Sir," said the younger, "we are the sons of two rich citizens of Placentia. Having a great desire to see the kingdom of Portugal, and wishing to satisfy our curiosity, we have each taken a hundred pistoles from our parents. As we are travelling on foot, we shall be able to get a good way with this money. What do you think?" "If I had as much," I answered, "Heaven knows how far I should go! I would travel over the four quarters of the globe. The deuce! Two hundred pistoles! Why, it is an immense sum! You will never see the end of it. If it is agreeable to you, gentlemen," I added, "I shall have the honour of accompanying you as far as the town of Almerin,¹ whither I am going to receive the inheritance of an uncle, who was settled there for about twenty years."

The young citizens declared that my company would give them pleasure, and so, when we had all three rested for a while, we trudged on to Alcantara, where we arrived long before night. We went to lodge at a good inn, and asked for a room. They gave us one containing a closet, with a lock upon it. Supper was ordered without delay; and whilst it was being got ready, I proposed to my fellow travellers to take a stroll through the town. They agreed,

¹ See INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. I. page xl.

so we locked up our knapsacks in the closet, whereof one of the citizens put the key in his pocket, and out we sallied from the inn. We went and saw the churches, and whilst we were in the principal one I suddenly pretended to have some important business in hand. "Gentlemen," I said to my companions, "I have just remembered that a citizen of Toledo asked me to deliver a short message to a shopkeeper who lives hard by this church. Just wait here for me, please, I will be back in a moment." With this excuse I left them, ran to the inn, flew to the closet, forced the lock, and searching the knapsacks of the young citizens, found their pistoles. Poor lads, I did not even leave them one to pay for their night's lodgings; I carried them all off. After this feat I quickly left the town, and took the road to Merida, without troubling myself about what might become of them.

This adventure, which I only looked upon as a trifle, enabled me to travel merrily. Young as I was, I felt capable of bearing myself discreetly. It may be said that I was very forward for my age. I resolved to buy a mule, and accordingly bought one at the very next village; I even changed my knapsack for a portmanteau, and began to assume something more of the character of a man of consequence. On the third day I came upon a man singing vespers as loud as he could, on the high road.

I thought from his appearance that he was a chorister, and said to him. "Well done, master bachelor, you sing splendidly; I can see you have your heart in your calling." "Sir," he replied, "I am a chorister, at your service, and I like to keep my voice in order."

Thus we entered into conversation. It was clear to me that I had fallen in with an intelligent and pleasant fellow, of about four or five-and-twenty. As he was on foot, I rode slowly, that I might have the pleasure of talking with him. Amongst other things we spoke of Toledo. "I know the town thoroughly," said the chorister; "I lived there a good while, and have some friends there too." "And in what part of Toledo did you reside?" I asked. "In New-street," he replied. "I was living there with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Mathias de Cordel,¹ and two or three other honourable gentlemen. We lodged and had our meals together, and passed the time very agreeably." These words surprised me; for be it observed that the gentlemen whose names he mentioned were the very sharpers with whom I had associated in Toledo. "Why, master chorister," I cried, "these gentlemen whom you have named are acquaintances of mine, and I too have lived with them in New-street." "I understand you," he replied,

¹ *Buena garra*, the Spanish for "gripe-well," and *Cordel* "rope" are appropriate names for sharpers.

smiling; "that is to say, you got into the gang since I left it, three years ago." "I have just quitted these gentlemen," I rejoined, "because I took a fancy for travelling; I mean to make the tour of Spain, and shall be all the better for a little more experience." "No doubt," said he, "to improve one's mind a man must travel. For the self-same reason I left Toledo, though I was living very pleasantly there. I thank Heaven," added he, "for having met a knight of my order, when I least expected it. Let us join our forces and travel together; let us practise on our neighbours' purses and avail ourselves of every opportunity which may offer itself for exercising our skill."

This proposal was made in so frank a spirit, and so politely, that I accepted it. He won my confidence straight off by giving me his own. We expanded towards each other; I related my history to him, and he did not conceal his adventures from me. He told me he came from Portalegro, whence he had been obliged to escape in haste through a piece of roguery, which went wrong by mischance, and in the disguise I met him. After he had fully confided his whole affairs to me, we resolved to go to Merida together, and try our fortune there, make a good haul if we could, and then decamp forthwith to go elsewhere. From this moment our possessions became common pro-

perty. It is true that Morales, for that was my fellow-traveller's name, was not very well off, for he had only five or six ducats, and some clothes that he carried in his wallet; but if I was richer than he in ready money, he, on the other hand, was more adroit than I in the art of deceiving men. We rode the mule in turns, and thus arrived at Merida.

We put up at an inn in the suburbs, where my companion took a coat out of his wallet; and as soon as he had put it on we took a turn in the town to reconnoitre the ground, and see if some opportunity of getting to work might present itself. We looked very closely at everything which met our gaze. As Homer would have said, we were like two kites searching the country for birds on which to prey. As we were waiting until chance should provide some subject for our industry, we espied in the street a grey-haired gentleman, sword in hand, defending himself against three men, who assailed him vigorously. The inequality of the combat shocked me, and as I am naturally given to blows, I hastened to the old man's assistance. Morales, to show me that I was not associated with a coward, followed my example. We charged the three assailants of the gentleman and obliged them to take to flight.

After they had been routed the old man was profuse in grateful speeches. "We are

delighted," I said to him, "to have come just in time to assist you; but let us at least know to whom we have had the good fortune of being of service; and, pray tell us, why these three men sought to murder you." "Gentlemen," he replied, "my obligations to you are too great to refuse to satisfy your curiosity. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my means in this town. One of the cut-throats from whom you rescued me is in love with my daughter. He asked her in marriage some time ago; but as he could not gain my consent, he attacked me just now sword in hand out of revenge." "And might one," I replied, "inquire why you did not give your daughter to this gentleman?" "I will explain it to you," he said; "I had a brother in business in this town, whose name was Augustine. Two months ago he happened to be at Calatrava, and lodged with his correspondent, Juan Velez de la Membrilla. They were intimate friends; and my brother, to cement their friendship more closely, promised the hand of my only daughter Florentina to his correspondent's son, not doubting but that he had influence enough with me to keep his promise. And in fact my brother, when he came back to Merida, no sooner spoke of this marriage than I agreed to it, for his sake. He then sent Florentina's portrait to Calatrava; but, alas! he had not the satis-

faction of completing his work, for he died three weeks ago. On his death-bed he adjured me to give my daughter to none except to his correspondent's son. I promised him, and this is the reason why I have refused Florentina to the gentleman who just now attacked me, though the match would have been a very good one. I am bound by my word, and I am expecting every moment the son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla, that I may make him my son-in-law, though I have never seen either him or his father. Pardon me," continued Jerome de Moyadas, "for relating this story, but you asked me for it."

I listened to this tale with much attention, and resolving upon a plot which suddenly entered my mind, I affected great astonishment, and raised my hands to Heaven.¹ Then turning to the old man I said pathetically: "Ah, Señor de Moyadas, is it possible that, on my arrival at Merida, I have been happy enough to save the life of my father-in-law?" These words greatly surprised the old citizen, and no less astonished Morales, whose countenance showed plainly that he thought me a consummate rascal. "What! do not my ears deceive me?" exclaimed the old man. "Are you really the son of my brother's correspondent?" "Yes, Señor Jerome de Moyadas," I replied,

¹ Lesage introduces here the plot of his charming comedy, *Crispin rival de son maître*.

putting a bold face upon it, and casting my arms round his neck, "I am that fortunate mortal for whom the adorable Florentina is destined. But, before I express you the joy it gives me to enter your family, permit me to shed on your bosom the tears which the recollection of your brother Augustine causes me. I should be the most ungrateful of beings if I were not acutely affected by the death of a man to whom I owe the happiness of my life." Whilst saying these words I again embraced honest Jerome, and then passed my hands across my eyes as though to brush away my tears. Morales, who in a moment perceived the advantage we might reap from such a deception, did not fail to second me. He pretended to be my servant, and began even to improve upon my lamentations for the death of Señor Augustine. "Ah, Señor Jerome," he cried, "what a loss you have suffered in your brother's death! He was such an honest man, the phoenix of commerce, an unselfish tradesman, a tradesman of integrity, a tradesman such as we rarely see!"

We had to deal with a simple and credulous man; far from suspecting our rascality, he lent himself readily to it. "And why," he said, "did you not come straight to my house? You ought not to have gone and stayed at an inn. Considering the terms we are on, there ought not to be any standing on ceremonies."

“Sir,” said Morales, taking up the speech, “my master is rather formal; it is a fault of his; he will permit me to reproach him with it. Though,” he added, “in this instance he is in some degree excusable for not desiring to appear before you in his present condition. We have been robbed on the road and have lost all our luggage.” “The young man,” I broke in, “is telling you the truth, Señor de Moyadas. This misfortune was the reason why I did not go straight to your house. I dared not present myself in this dress before a young lady who has never seen me, and I was, therefore, awaiting the return of a servant whom I have sent to Calatrava.” “Such an accident,” rejoined the old man, “ought not to have prevented your coming to stay in my house, and I insist that you will take up your abode there forthwith.”

He, thereupon, took me home with him, and on the way we discussed the robbery which I pretended had been committed. I assured him that my greatest grief was at having lost, amongst my luggage, the portrait of Florentina. The citizen replied laughingly, that I must console myself for this loss, and that the original was better than the copy. In fact, as soon as we were in the house, he called his daughter, who was not more than sixteen, and who might be considered an accomplished young lady. “You behold,” he said, “the lady whom my late brother promised to you.”

“Oh, sir,” I cried, with an impassioned manner, “there is no need to tell me that it is the lovely Florentina who stands before me. These bewitching features are engraved on my memory, and yet more deeply in my heart. If the portrait I have lost, and which was but a feeble sketch of so many attractions, could inflame me with the most ardent passion, judge what transports must affect me at this moment.” “Such language is too flattering,” said Florentina, “and I am not vain enough to fancy that I deserve it.” “Go on with your compliments,” the father broke in, and on this he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Morales aside, said to him, “My friend, so the robbers carried off all your luggage, and of course your money too, for they always begin with that?” “Yes, sir,” replied my comrade; “a numerous band of highwaymen fell upon us near Castil-Blazo. They only left us the clothes we carry on our backs; but we expect every moment to receive bills of exchange, and then we shall be on our legs again.”

“Whilst you are waiting for your bills of exchange,” replied the old man, taking a purse out of his pocket, “here are a hundred pistoles at your disposal.” “Oh, sir,” rejoined Morales, “my master will not accept them. You do not know him. Bless him! he is one of the most scrupulous men in that way. He is not one of those fashionable young fellows who are ready to

accept money from everyone. Young as he is, he cannot bear to run into debt; he would rather beg his bread than borrow one farthing." "So much the better," said the citizen, "I respect him all the more for it. I cannot bear anyone running into debt; though I can pardon it in men of quality, because they have had that privilege a long time. I shall not press your master then," he continued; "and since any offer of pecuniary assistance will pain him, we must say no more about it." With these words he was putting back the purse into his pocket, but Morales held his hand. "Stay, Señor de Moyadas," he said, "whatever aversion my master may have to borrowing, I do not despair of making him take your hundred pistoles. There is a way of dealing with him. After all it is only from strangers that he does not like to borrow. He is not so fastidious with his own family. In fact, he asks his father very readily for all the money he wants. The young gentleman, you see, knows how to discriminate between men, and he ought to look upon you, sir, as a second father."

By such speeches Morales obtained possession of the old man's purse. The latter then rejoined his daughter and myself, and found us exchanging compliments. He interrupted our conversation, and told Florentina of the obligation he was under to me. Then he spoke to me in such a manner, as convinced me of his

gratitude. I took advantage of such a favourable disposition, and told the good man that the most touching mark of gratitude which he could bestow on me was to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded with a good grace to my impatience, and assured me that in three days at latest I should be the husband of Florentina. He even added that, instead of the six thousand ducats which he had promised as her dowry, he would make it up to ten thousand, to prove how deeply he felt himself affected by the service I had rendered him.

Thus Morales and I were in the house of honest Jerome de Moyadas, well treated, and in the pleasant expectation of fingering ten thousand ducats, with which we intended to make a speedy exit from Merida. Nevertheless, some fear disturbed our joy. We dreaded lest the true son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla should arrive before the end of the three days to mar our good fortune, or rather to destroy it by his sudden appearance. This fear was not ill-founded. On the very next day a country-fied-looking fellow, carrying a portmanteau, came to the house of Florentina's father. I was not in at the time, but Morales was. "Sir," said the countryman to the old man, "I belong to the gentleman from Calatrava who is to be your son-in-law, to Señor Pedro de la Membrilla. We have both just arrived in this town; he will be here directly, he has sent me forward

to prepare you for his arrival." He had hardly finished these words before his master appeared, which vastly astonished the old man, and somewhat disconcerted Morales.

Young Pedro was a very good-looking fellow. He began at once paying his compliments to Florentina's father; but the simple man did not give him time to finish his speech, and turning to my partner in iniquity, asked what was the meaning of all this. Then Morales, who yielded in effrontery to no one, assumed an air of assurance, and said to the old gentleman, "Sir, these two fellows here before you belong to the band of robbers who plundered us on the highway; I recollect them both, and especially the one who has the audacity to say that he is the son of Señor Juan Velez de la Membrilla." The old man believed Morales without hesitation; and persuaded that the newcomers were impostors, he said to them: "Gentlemen, you have come too late and been anticipated. Pedro de la Membrilla has been in my house since yesterday." "Take care what you are saying," replied the young man from Calatrava. "You are being deceived. You have an impostor in the house. I tell you that Juan Velez de la Membrilla has no other son but me." "That will not do," rejoined the old man. "I know who you are. Do you not recognise this young man, and do you not remember his master, whom you robbed on the Calatrava road?"

“What, robbed?” exclaimed Pedro. “If I were not in your house I would cut off the ears of the rascal who has the impudence to call me a robber. Let him thank your presence, which restrains my anger. Sir,” he continued, “I repeat that you are being imposed upon; I am the young man to whom your brother Augustine promised your daughter. If it be your pleasure I will produce all the letters which he wrote to my father on the subject of this marriage. Will you believe me if I show you the portrait of Florentina, which he sent me a little while before his death?”

“No,” broke in the old citizen, “the portrait will not persuade me any more than the letters. I know well enough how they came into your hands, and I advise you in kindness to get out of Merida as soon as you can, if you do not want to receive the punishment due to men of your sort.” “This is too much,” the young man interrupted in his turn. “I will not be robbed of my name with impunity, neither will I be called a highwayman. There are some people in this town who know me; I will go and fetch them, and will return with them to confound the trick which prejudices you against me.” With these words he withdrew, followed by his servant, and Morales triumphantly kept possession of the field. This adventure, indeed, made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to have me married to his daughter

that very day; and he immediately gave the necessary orders for the celebration.

Though my comrade was very glad to see Florentina's father so favourably disposed towards us, he was not without anxiety. He dreaded the consequences of the measures which he concluded Pedro would take, and he waited impatiently for me, to make me acquainted with what had occurred. I found him plunged in deep meditation. "What is the matter, my friend?" I asked; "you seem much engrossed." "Not without reason," he replied, and he told me what had happened. "Now you may judge," he added, "whether I was wrong to be meditating. It is you with your rashness, who have got us into this scrape. The idea, it must be confessed, was a brilliant one, and you would have covered yourself with glory if it had succeeded; but to all appearances it will end ill, and therefore it is my opinion that, in order to avoid explanations we make a run for it with what we have already got from the old man."

"Master Morales," I replied to this speech, "let us not move so fast; you soon give in to difficulties; and scarcely do credit to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other gentlemen with whom you lived in Toledo. When a man has served his apprenticeship under such great masters, he ought not so easily to be alarmed. For my part, I wish to walk in the

footsteps of these heroes, and prove that I am their worthy pupil; I bear up against the obstacle which frightens you, and I undertake to surmount it." "If you succeed," said my companion, "I shall set you above all the great men mentioned by Plutarch."

As Morales finished speaking Jerome de Moyadas entered. "I am come, he said, "to prepare everything for your marriage. You shall be my son-in-law this very evening. Your servant," he added, "will have told you what has happened. What do you think of the impudence of the rogue who wanted to persuade me that he was the son of my brother's correspondent?" Morales was completely at a loss to know how I should get out of this scrape, and he was not a little surprised to hear me, in a most ingenuous tone, reply to Moyadas, whilst looking at him sadly: "Señor, if I chose, I might encourage you in your error and profit by it; but I feel that it is not in my nature to carry on an imposition. I must confess to you frankly that I am not the son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla."¹ "What do you tell me?" interrupted the old man, with as much haste as surprise. "What! you are not the young man to whom my brother . . ." "For mercy's sake," I interrupted him in my turn; "I have begun a faithful and sincere narra-

¹ Here begins a new deceit, of which there is no trace in *Crispin rival de son maître*.

tive, and now condescend to hear me out. I have loved your daughter these eight days, and this passion has kept me in Merida. Yesterday, after having rescued you, I was making up my mind to ask her in marriage; but my mouth was closed when you told me she was destined for another. You informed me that your brother, on his death-bed, entreated you to give her to Pedro de la Membrilla, that such a promise had been made, and that, in short, you were the slave of your pledged word. This information overwhelmed me; and, I confess it, reduced to despair, my love suggested the stratagem that I have made use of. Nevertheless, I frankly declare that I have secretly reproached myself for this trick; but I flatter myself you would pardon me on my discovering it to you, and acquainting you that I am an Italian prince travelling incognito. My father is sovereign of certain valleys lying between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy. I even fancied that you would be agreeably surprised on my revealing my birth, and I anticipated the joy which I, a scrupulous and enamoured husband, would feel in announcing this to Florentina after our marriage. Heaven," I added, changing my tone, "would not grant me so great a happiness. Pedro de la Membrilla has appeared; and I must restore him his name, whatever the restitution may cost me. Your promise engages you to make him your

son-in-law. I can but lament it; but I cannot complain of it. It is your duty to prefer him to me without considering my rank, without pitying the cruel forlorn condition to which you are going to reduce me. I will not point out to you that your brother was but the uncle of your daughter, that you are her father, and that it would be more reasonable to acquit yourself of the obligation which you owe me than to make it a point of honour to keep a promise which ought to have but little force to bind you."

"Yes, undoubtedly, that is quite right," exclaimed Jerome de Moyadas; "and I do not mean to hesitate between you and Pedro de la Membrilla. If my brother Augustine were still alive, he would not think it amiss that I should give the preference to a man who has saved my life, and what is more, to a prince who does not scorn an alliance with me, but condescends to solicit it. I should be hostile to my own happiness, and be entirely without understanding, were I not to give you my daughter, and were I not to hasten a marriage so advantageous for her." "Señor," I replied, "do not act hastily, do nothing except after mature deliberation. Consult your own interests alone; and, in spite of my nobility . . ." "You are scarcely serious," he interrupted; "can I hesitate for a moment? No, prince; I entreat you to be good enough to honour the happy

Florentina with your hand this very evening.” “Well,” I said, “so be it: go yourself, be the bearer of these tidings; and announce to her what glorious destiny awaits her.”

Whilst the honest citizen hurried off to tell his daughter that she had made the conquest of a prince, Morales, who had heard the whole conversation, threw himself on his knees before me, and said: “Most august Italian prince, son of the sovereign of the valleys lying between Switzerland, the Milanese, and Savoy, suffer me to cast myself at your highness’s feet, in acknowledgment of the ecstasy into which you have thrown me. On the word of a knave, I declare you are a prodigy. I always thought myself the best man in that line; but frankly I lower my flag to you, though you have had less experience than I.” “You are no longer anxious, then?” I asked. “Oh, not at all,” he replied; “I am no longer afraid of Señor Pedro. Let him come again as soon as he pleases.” Morales and I now thought ourselves firmly established; we even began to consider what course we should pursue with the dowry, on which we reckoned so surely, that we could not have thought ourselves more certain of it, had it been already in our pockets. But we had not got it yet, and the sequel of the adventure did not answer to our expectation.

In a short time we saw the young man from Calatrava return. He was accompanied by two

citizens and an alguazil, whose moustache and swarthy complexion made him look as dignified as his office did. Florentina's father was of the party. "Señor de Moyadas," said Pedro to him, I have brought you three respectable people who know me, and can tell you who I am." "Yes, undoubtedly," cried the alguazil, "I can depose to the fact. I certify to all those whom it may concern that I know you; your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Membrilla; whosoever dares to maintain the contrary is an impostor." "I believe you, master alguazil," said honest Jerome de Moyadas. "Your testimony is unimpeachable, as well as that of the respectable tradesmen in your company. I am fully convinced that the young gentleman who has brought you here is the only son of my brother's correspondent. But what is that to me? I am no longer inclined to give him my daughter; I have changed my mind."

"Oh, that is quite another matter," said the alguazil. "I only came into your house to assure you that this young man is known to me. You certainly have the authority of a parent over your daughter, and no one can compel you to give her in marriage against your inclination." "Nor do I," interrupted Don Pedro, "presume to coerce the intention of Señor de Moyadas, who can dispose of his daughter as he sees fit; but he will permit me

to ask him why he has changed his mind, and whether he has any cause of complaint against me? Alas! if I must lose the sweet hope of being his son-in-law, at least let me have the satisfaction of learning that I have not lost it through my own fault." "I have no complaint to make of you," answered the good old man; "nay, I will even tell you that I regret to be under the necessity of breaking my word, for which I entreat you to pardon me. I am persuaded that you are too generous to bear me ill-will for having preferred to you a rival who has saved my life. You see him here," he continued, pointing to me, "this is the nobleman who delivered me out of great danger; and the better still to justify myself to you, I may tell you that he is an Italian prince, who, in spite of the inequality of our condition, wishes to marry Florentina, with whom he has fallen in love."

At these last words Pedro remained dumb and confounded. The two tradesmen opened their eyes wide, and seemed much surprised. But the alguazil, accustomed to look at things from their worst side, suspected this marvellous adventure to be a piece of roguery, by which he might obtain some advantage. He stared at me very hard; and as my features, which seemed to be unknown to him, baffled his good intentions, he examined my companion with the same attention. Unfortunately

for my highness, he recognised Morales, and remembered having seen him in the prisons of Ciudad Real. "Ay, ay!" he exclaimed, "here is one of my customers. I remember this gentleman, and I declare him to be one of the most skilful rogues within the Spanish dominions." "Softly, softly, master alguazil," said Jerome de Moyadas, "this young man of whom you draw such an unfavourable picture is servant to a prince." "Very well," replied the alguazil; "I need no more to know what to think about this affair. I judge of the master by the man, and I have no doubt these gallants are a couple of rascals who have laid their heads together in order to deceive you. I am a judge of such cattle; and to prove to you that these fellows are adventurers, I shall take them off to prison at once, and shall let them have a private interview with the Corregidor, after which they may be made aware that we have not yet dispensed with whipping-posts." "Stay, officer," said the old man; "let us not push the matter so far. People of your profession are not afraid of bringing honest men into trouble. May not this servant be a rogue without his master being so; and is it a rare thing to see rascals in the service of princes?" "Are you joking with your princes?" broke in the alguazil. "This young fellow is a sharper, take my word for it; and I arrest him in the king's name, as well as

his comrade. I have twenty soldiers at the door, who shall drag them to prison, if they will not be taken there quietly. So come along, may it please your highness," said he, addressing himself to me, "and let us be off."

I was thunderstruck at these words, as well as Morales; and our agitation made Jerome de Moyadas suspect us, or rather discredited us in his mind. He came to the conclusion that we had tried to impose on his credulity. However, he behaved on this occasion like a gentleman. Officer," he said to the alguazil, "perhaps your suspicions may be without foundation; but, perhaps, on the other hand, they may be only too true. Whatever may be the case, let us not investigate this matter any further, but let these two young men go where they will. Please do not oppose their departure; it is a favour I ask you, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I owe them." "If I were to do my duty," replied the alguazil, "we should clap these gentlemen in prison, regardless of your entreaties; but I shall relent for your sake, on condition that they quit this town forthwith; for if I find them here to-morrow, egad! they shall see what will happen to them."

When Morales and I heard that we were to be let off scot free, we recovered our spirits a little. We tried to speak with firmness, and to maintain that we were men of honour; but the alguazil looked askance at us and silenced

us. I do not know how it is that these gentry have the pull over us. Thus we were obliged to abandon Florentina and her dowry to Pedro de la Membrilla, who no doubt became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas. I and my comrade made off, taking the road to Truxillo, and consoled by the thought that we had at least gained a hundred pistoles by this adventure. About an hour before nightfall we were passing through a little village, as we intended to sleep further on. But we saw what seemed rather a good inn for such a place, and the landlord and landlady were at the door sitting on two stone seats. The landlord, a tall, spare, rather elderly fellow, was thrumming a wretched guitar, for the amusement of his wife, who seemed to listen to the sounds with pleasure. "Gentlemen," the tavern-keeper cried out to us, when he saw we did not halt, "you will do well to stop here. It is three good leagues to the nearest village, and you will not be as comfortable as here, I assure you. Take my advice and come into my house; I shall provide for you good cheer and at a reasonable price." We allowed ourselves to be persuaded, went up to the landlord and landlady, and saluted them; and sitting down by their side began all four to converse of indifferent subjects. Our host said he was an officer of the Holy Brotherhood; and the hostess was a buxom merry dame who seemed to understand well how to make the most of her commodities.

Our talk was interrupted by the arrival of from a dozen to fifteen gentlemen, some mounted on mules, and others on horseback, and followed by about thirty sumpter-mules laden with packages. "Oh, what a princely retinue!" exclaimed the landlord, at the sight of so many people; "where can I put them all?" In an instant the village seemed to be full of men and animals. Close to the inn there was fortunately an immense barn, where the mules and the baggage were secured, the saddle-mules and the horses being put up elsewhere. As for their masters, they thought less of bespeaking beds than of ordering a good meal to be got ready. The landlord, the landlady, and a young servant girl whom they kept, set about this, and laid hands on all the poultry in their yard. These fowls, and some stews made of rabbits and tom cats, as well as an enormous tureen of mutton broth and cabbages, was enough for all the company.

Morales and myself looked at these gentlemen, who from time to time eyed us also. At length we joined in their conversation, and told them that, if it was agreeable, we would take our supper with them. They assured us that it would give them pleasure, so we all sat down together. There was one among them who seemed to take the lead, and to whom the rest, though otherwise familiar enough with him, showed a certain degree of deference. Indeed,

this gentleman sat at the head of the table, spoke in a loud voice, and sometimes even abruptly contradicted the others, who, far from retorting, appeared to respect his opinions. The conversation happened to fall on Andalusia, and as Morales took it into his head to praise Seville, the gentleman of whom I have been speaking said to him: "Sir, you praise my native town; at least I was born in the neighbourhood, since it was in the village of Mayrena that I first saw the light." "I can say the same thing," replied my companion, "I also am from Mayrena, and it is scarcely possible that I should be unacquainted with your parents, I who know all the people in the place, from the alcade to the meanest inhabitant. Whose son are you?" "An honest notary's," replied the gentleman, "by name Martin Morales." "Martin Morales!" exclaimed my comrade, with as much joy as surprise; "on my word, this is a strange adventure! Then you are my elder brother Manuel Morales?" "Exactly so," said the other, "and you, apparently, are my young brother Lewis, whom I left in the cradle when I turned my back upon my father's house?" "The very same," replied my comrade. With these words they both rose from the table, and embraced each other over and over again. Then Don Manuel said to the company: "Gentlemen, this event is very marvellous.

By mere chance I meet with and recognise a brother whom I have not seen for twenty years at least; permit me to introduce him to you." Then all the gentlemen, who had risen from their seats out of civility, paid their compliments to the younger Morales, and overwhelmed him with embraces. After this we sat down again, and remained at table all night without going to bed. The two brothers sat side by side and conversed in low tones about their family affairs, whilst the other guests plied the bottle and made merry.

Lewis had a long conversation with Manuel, and then taking me aside, said: "All these gentlemen belong to the household of the Count of Montanos, whom the king has lately appointed Viceroy of Majorca. They are taking his baggage to Alicante, where they are to embark. My brother, who has become this nobleman's steward, proposes to take me with him, and when I showed myself unwilling to leave you, he said that if you would accompany us he would get you a good situation. My dear friend," he added, "I advise you not to refuse this offer. Let us go together to the island of Majorca. If we like it we can stay there, and if we do not like it, we can but return to Spain."

I gladly accepted the proposal. Young Morales and I joined the Count's servants, and left the inn with them before daybreak. We pushed on by forced marches to the town of

Alicante, where I bought a guitar and ordered a handsome suit of clothes before embarking. I could think of nothing but the island of Majorca, and Lewis Morales was in the same mood. It seemed as though we had done with rogueries; to tell the truth, we wanted to pass for men of honour amongst the gentlemen with whom we were, so we put a restraint upon our genius. At length we embarked cheerfully, and trusted soon to be at Majorca; but hardly had we cleared the Gulf of Alicante when a terrible storm arose. At this part of my story I might have a capital opportunity of giving you a fine description of a tempest, of painting the atmosphere full of flames, of making the thunder roar, the wind whistle, the waves rise, and so forth; but, dispensing with these flowers of rhetoric, I shall only say that the storm was violent, and obliged us to bear for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert island, where there was a small fort, garrisoned by five or six soldiers and an officer who received us very politely.

As we were obliged to spend several days in this place in order to repair our sails and rigging, we had recourse to various amusements to wile away the time. Everyone followed his inclinations: some played at primero;¹ others

¹ *Primero*, a complicated game at cards, very fashionable in England in Shakespeare's time. The rule of the game was, that when the hands were shown, if the cards were of different suits, the highest number was called *primero*, or prime. In Dyce's

diverted themselves in different ways. For my part, I liked to rove about the island, with a few of our gentlemen who were fond of walking. We clambered from rock to rock, for the ground is uneven, stony throughout, and the soil scanty. One day, when we were looking at these dry and barren places, and reflecting on the caprice of nature, which shows herself fertile or sterile according to her pleasure, we suddenly became sensible of a very delicious odour. We turned at once towards the east, whence the fragrance seemed to come, and found to our astonishment among the rocks a large plot of verdure, formed of honeysuckles more luxurious and more odorous even than those which grow in Andalusia. We were not sorry to approach nearer these lovely shrubs which perfumed the air for some distance round, and found that they fringed the entrance to a very deep cavern, which was large, and not very dark. We descended, in a roundabout way, by some stone steps, the sides of which were decked with flowers, and formed a natural winding staircase. When we had got to the bottom we saw, winding through sand yellower than gold, several rills, fed by dropping water, ceaselessly distilled from the rocks within,

Shakespeare, in the glossary, under "primero," a portion of Minshew's *Pleasant and Delightful Dialogues in Spanish and English*, etc., 1599, is given, from which the reader may "gather what he can concerning the game."

which lost themselves underground. The water seemed to us so clear that we were tempted to drink of it; and it was so cool that we resolved to return to this spot on the following day, and to bring with us several bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them here with great pleasure.

It was not without regret that we left such an agreeable spot; and on returning to the fort we did not fail to boast to our comrades of our fine discovery; but the commander of the fort said he would warn us as a friend not to return to the cavern with which we were so much charmed. "Why so?" I asked. "Is there anything to be afraid of?" "Of course there is," he replied. "The corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes touch at this island, and go to that spring to lay in water. One day they surprised there two of my soldiers whom they reduced to slavery." It was useless for the officer to try and dissuade us; he could not convince us. We thought he was joking, and next day I returned to the cavern with three of my companions. We even went without fire-arms, to show that we apprehended no danger. The younger Morales declined being of the party; he preferred, like his brother, to remain and gamble in the fort.

We went down to the bottom of the cave as on the preceding day, and placed to cool in the streams several bottles of wine which we

had brought with us. Whilst we were enjoying them, playing the guitar, and conversing cheerfully, there appeared at the mouth of the cavern several men with thick mustaches, turbans, and Turkish dresses. We fancied that they were some of the count's household, with the commandant of the fort, who had disguised themselves in this fashion to frighten us. With this impression on our mind we began to laugh, and allowed about ten of the men to descend without dreaming of defending ourselves. In a few moments we were sadly undeceived, and were convinced that it was a corsair who had come with his crew to carry us off. "Surrender, you dogs," he cried in Castilian, "or else you shall all die!" At the same time the men who accompanied him levelled their muskets at us, and we should have received a nice volley if we had made the least resistance. But we were wise enough not to do so. We preferred slavery to death; so we delivered our swords to the pirate, who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and carried aboard his vessel, which was not far off. When this was done, he set sail and took the road to Algiers.

Thus we were justly punished for having neglected the warning given us by the officer of the garrison. The first thing the corsair did was to turn our pockets inside out, and take all the money we had. It was a fine windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles from the

young men of Placentia, the hundred which Morales had received from Jerome de Moyadas, and which I had unfortunately taken charge of, all were ruthlessly filched from me. My companions, too, had well-filled purses; in short, it was an excellent haul. The pirate appeared delighted with it; but the rascal was not content with taking our money, he insulted us by jests, which we felt much less than the necessity of having to endure them. After a thousand jokes, and in order to make sport of us in another fashion, he called for the bottles of wine which we had set to cool in the spring, and which his men had taken good care to carry off; and began with their assistance to empty them, drinking to our health in derision.

Meanwhile, my comrades showed by their countenances what was passing within them. They were the more mortified by their captivity, as they had entertained the most favourable ideas of the island of Majorca, where they had reckoned on spending a delightful life. For my part, I had fortitude enough to resign myself, and being less overwhelmed by my misfortune than the others were, I entered into conversation with our banterer, and even replied to his jokes good-humouredly, which pleased him. "Young man," he said, "I like your disposition; and in the long run, instead of lamenting and sighing, it is better for a man to be armed with patience and to accommodate himself to circumstances.

Play us a little tune," he said, seeing that I carried a guitar; "let us hear what you can do." I obeyed him as soon as he had ordered his men to unbind my arms, and began to play the guitar in such a style as to elicit his applause. The fact is I played pretty well on this instrument. I sang also, and my voice gave equal satisfaction. All the Turks on board showed by their admiring gestures how pleased they were to hear me, whence I concluded that they were not without taste in music. The pirate whispered in my ear that, though in slavery, I should not be unhappy, and that with my talents I might reckon on an employment which would render my captivity very endurable.

I was rather pleased by these words; but, flattering as they were, I was not without some anxiety concerning the situation which the corsair mentioned in such a promising manner; I feared that it might not be to my taste. When we arrived in the port of Algiers, we found a large number of persons assembled to receive us; and, even before we had disembarked, they uttered a thousand exclamations of joy. Add to this, that the air resounded with a confused noise of trumpets, Moorish flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which made up a symphony rather noisy than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings proceeded from a false report current

about the town. It had been generally stated that the renegado Mahomed—such was our pirate's name—had lost his life in attacking a large Genoese vessel ; so that all his relatives and friends, being informed of his return, hastened to testify their delight on seeing him.

We had no sooner landed than they took me and my companions to the palace of the bashaw Soliman,¹ where a Christian secretary, addressing each of us in turn, asked us our names, our age, country, religion, and capacities. Then Mahomed, pointing me out to the bashaw, praised my voice, and told him that I also played on the guitar exquisitely. No more was needed to make Soliman resolve to select me for his own service. I was therefore retained for his seraglio, and was taken there to be installed into my destined post. The other captives were led into the market-place, and sold according to custom. What Mahomed had predicted on board ship was verified ; my lot proved a happy one. I was neither sent to a prison, nor set to hard work. Soliman, by way of distinction, ordered me to be put in a particular quarter of his seraglio, along with five or six slaves of superior rank who were shortly to be ransomed, and who had only slight occupations. My business was to water the orange trees and flowers in the garden.

¹ Lesage speaks of a " bashaw " of Algiers, but already about the year 1600 a " Dey " had been elected by the Divan.

There could not be a milder occupation, so I thanked my stars, and felt, without knowing why, that I should not be unhappy in Soliman's palace.

This bashaw—I must draw his portrait—was a man of about forty years of age, of a fine figure, very polite, and very gallant for a Turk. His favourite was a Cashmere woman, who, by her intelligence and beauty had obtained an absolute sway over him. He loved her, nay, he worshipped her, and had some new entertainment provided for her every day; at one time a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and at another a comedy after the Turkish fashion, that is to say, a dramatic performance, in which modesty and decency were no more respected than the rules of Aristotle.¹ The favourite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was passionately fond of these plays; she sometimes even made her own women represent Arab pieces before the bashaw. In these she herself took some of the parts, and charmed all beholders by the grace and vivacity of her movements. One day when I was among the musicians at one of these representations Soliman ordered me to play on the guitar, and to sing a solo between the acts. I had the good luck to please him, for he not only applauded me by clapping his

¹ The chief dramatic representations among the Turks are shadow pictures, in which the principal actors are movable, and indecently behaving puppets.

hands, but complimented me in words; and the favourite, I thought, looked favourably on me.

Next morning, as I was watering some orange trees in the gardens, a eunuch passed near me, who, without stopping or saying a word, threw down a note at my feet. I picked it up with an emotion of mingled joy and fear; and lying down on the ground that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio, and hidden behind the boxes in which the orange trees were planted, I opened it. Inside I found a diamond of very considerable value, and these words in good Spanish:—"Young Christian, thank Heaven for your captivity. Love and fortune shall make it a happy one: love if you are sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman; and fortune if you have the courage to despise danger of every kind."

I could not for a moment doubt that the letter was from the favourite sultana; the style and the diamond convinced me of that. I am not naturally timid; and moreover the vanity of standing well with the mistress of a powerful sovereign, and still more the hope of cajoling her out of four times as much money as was needed for my ransom, all this made me resolve to risk this adventure, whatever danger I might have to encounter. I continued my work, pondering how I could get into the apartment of Farrukhnaz, or rather expecting that she would herself show me a way; for

I made sure she would not stop at this point, and that she would take more than half the trouble herself. I was not mistaken. The same eunuch who had passed me, came by an hour after, and said: "Christian, have you reflected, and are you bold enough to follow me?" I answered in the affirmative. "Well," he replied, "may Heaven preserve you! You will see me again to-morrow morning; and, then, be ready to go whither you are led." After saying these words he withdrew. On the next morning I actually saw him make his appearance about eight o'clock. He made a sign for me to go along with him; I obeyed, and he took me into a room where there was a large roll of cloth, just brought there by himself and another eunuch, and which they were to take to the sultana's apartment, to serve as a decoration for an Arabian comedy which was in rehearsal, to be acted before the bashaw.

The two eunuchs, seeing that I was ready to do what they wished, lost no time. They unrolled the cloth, made me lie at full length inside, and then, at the risk of suffocating me, rolled it up again, with me in the middle. Then, taking hold of it at each end, they carried me in this fashion safely into the bed-chamber of the lovely Cashmere women. Nobody was there but herself and an old female slave devoted to her interest. They both unrolled the cloth; and Farrukhnaz, when she saw me, broke out

into such transports of joy as plainly betrayed the mood of the ladies of her native country. Bold as I naturally was, I could not find myself suddenly introduced into the private apartments of the women without feeling some slight terror. The lady duly perceived it, and, to allay my dread, said: "Young man, fear nothing. Soliman has just left for his country house, where he will remain all day; so that here we can converse with each other freely."

These words reassured me; my features assumed an expression which redoubled the delight of the favourite. "You have won my heart," she continued, "and I intend to soften the severity of your slavery. You seem to be worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you. Though under the guise of a slave you have a noble and gallant appearance, which shows me that you are no ordinary person. Speak to me in confidence; tell me who you are. I know that captives of noble birth conceal their rank, in order to be ransomed at a lower price; but you need not act thus with me. Such a precaution would even offend me, since I pledge myself to obtain your liberty. Be, therefore, sincere, and confess that you are a young man of good family." "Indeed, madam," I replied, "it would ill become me to repay your kindness with dissimulation. You are absolutely bent upon discovering my condition; and I must satisfy you. I am the

son of a Spanish grandee." I might actually have spoken the truth; at all events the sultana believed it; and congratulating herself on having been attracted by a gentleman of rank, she assured me that it should not be her fault if we did not often meet each other in private. We had a very long conversation together. I never saw a more engaging woman. She spoke several languages—and for one, Spanish, in which she conversed very fairly. When she thought it was time for us to part, I got by her request into a large wicker basket, covered with a piece of silk, embroidered by her own hand. Then the two slaves who had carried me in, were summoned, and they took me out again, as though it were a present from the favourite to the bashaw; a thing which is sacred from all the men intrusted with guarding the harem.

Farrukhnaz and I found other opportunities of conversing together, and that charming captive gradually inspired me with as much love as she herself entertained for me. Our understanding remained secret for two months; though it is very difficult in a harem to conceal the mysteries of love long from all these Arguses. But an unlucky accident upset all our little plans, and gave my fortune a very different aspect. One day when they had brought me to the sultana in the body of an artificial dragon which had been invented for

a certain spectacle, and whilst I was conversing with her, Soliman, whom I believed to be out of town, came in unexpectedly. He entered the favourite's apartment so suddenly that the old slave had scarcely time to warn us of his approach, and that I had not even an opportunity of concealing myself; thus I was the first object that met the bashaw's gaze.

He seemed vastly astonished at seeing me, and his eyes kindled at once with fury. I thought my last moment had come, and fancied myself already under torture. As for Farrukhnaz, I clearly perceived that she was terrified; but, instead of confessing her crime, and imploring Soliman's pardon, she said to him:—"My lord, before you pronounce sentence, condescend to hear me. No doubt appearances condemn me, and I seem to be committing a treachery against you deserving of the most dreadful punishments. I have ordered this young captive to be brought hither; and in order to introduce him into my apartment, employed the same artifices that I should have used if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Yet, I call our great Prophet to witness, that, notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful to you. It was my wish to converse with this Christian slave in order to wean him from his religion, and induce him to follow that of the true believers. I met with the resistance I fully expected; but yet I have overcome

his prejudices, and he has just promised me to embrace Mahometanism."

I confess that I ought to have flatly contradicted the favourite, without regard to the dangerous predicament in which I stood; but in the dejection of my mind, moved by the peril of a woman whom I loved, and trembling still more for myself, I remained dumbfounded and perturbed. I could not utter a word; and the bashaw, persuaded by my silence that his mistress spoke nothing but the truth, suffered himself to be appeased. "Madam," he replied, "I am willing to believe that you have not wronged me, and that the desire of doing a thing so acceptable to the Prophet, has induced you to venture on such a hazardous proceeding. Therefore I forgive your imprudence, on condition that this captive forthwith assumes the turban." He immediately sent for a marabout,¹ and I was clothed in Turkish dress. I submitted to all that was required, not having the power to resist; or rather I did not know what I did, in the derangement of my thoughts. How many Christians would have been as cowardly as I was, in similar circumstances!

After the ceremony I quitted the seraglio in order to take possession, under the name of Sidy Hally, of a small place which Soliman had given

¹ A *marabout* is properly a Moorish priest or combatant against the infidels.

me. I never saw the sultana again ; but one day one of her eunuchs came to me, and brought me in her name various jewels, worth about two thousand golden sultanins,¹ with a note, in which she assured me she would never forget my generous compliance in becoming a Mahometan to save her life. In fact, besides the presents I had received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained, through her influence, a post far more considerable than the first, and became in the course of six or seven years one of the richest renegades in the town of Algiers.

You may imagine that, if I assisted at the prayers offered up by the Mussulmans in their mosques, and observed the other duties of their religion, it was only sheer deception. I nursed within me a determined resolution to return into the bosom of the Church ; and for that purpose I contemplated retiring some day to Spain or Italy, with the wealth I should have amassed. Meanwhile I lived very pleasantly. I dwelt in a fine house ; I had magnificent gardens, a great number of slaves, and some very pretty women in my seraglio. Though in this country the use of wine is forbidden to Mahometans, they nevertheless for the most part drink it secretly. As for me, I drank it without any ceremony, as all renegades do. I remember in particular two of my boon com-

¹ A *sultanin* is a Turkish gold coin of the value of about ten shillings ; formerly there were *sultanins* of nearly half that value.

panions, with whom I often spent the night at table. The one was a Jew, the other an Arab. I thought them trustworthy fellows, and thus lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening I invited them to supper at my house. I had that very day lost a dog which I was passionately fond of; we washed his body, and buried it with all the ceremonies observed at Mahometan funerals. We did not do this to cast ridicule on the Mussulman religion; it was only done for a frolic, and to gratify a silly fancy which we conceived over our liquor, to pay the last honours to my dog.

Nevertheless this affair had nearly proved my ruin, as you shall hear. On the next day there came a fellow to my house, who said: "Señor Sidy Hally,¹ I come to you on a matter of importance. The cadi wishes to speak with you; pray take the trouble to go to him at once." "I beg you to tell me what he wants with me," I asked. "He will tell it you himself," he answered. "All I can say is that an Arab trader who supped with you last night, has laid an information respecting a certain act of impiety committed by you with regard to a dog which you buried. You know well what I mean; it is on that charge I summon you to appear to-day before the judge; failing which you are hereby warned that criminal proceedings will be taken against you." After having said

¹ *Sidy* means "sir" or "lord" in Turkish.

these words he went away, and left me thunder-struck by the summons. The Arab had no ground of complaint against me, and I could not understand why the wretch had played me this trick. However, the business required to be attended to. I knew the *cadi* to be a severe man to all appearance, but not very scrupulous in reality, and moreover avaricious. I therefore put two hundred golden sultanins in my purse, and went to the judge. He took me into his private room, and said to me, with a stern look : “ You are an impious, sacrilegious, abominable man. You have performed the funeral service of a Mussulman over a dog ! What a profanation ! Is it thus you respect our most holy ceremonies ? Have you only become a Mahometan to mock at our worship ? ” “ Worthy judge,” I replied, “ the Arab who has told you such a cock and bull story, this false friend, was an accomplice in my crime ; if crime it be, to give the honours of burial to a faithful servant, to an animal which possessed a thousand good qualities. He was so attached to persons of merit and distinction that even when dying he desired to bequeath them tokens of his friendship. He leaves them all his property by his last will and testament, of which I am the executor. To one man he leaves twenty crowns, to another thirty ; and he has not forgotten your worship,” I continued, drawing out my purse. “ Here are

two hundred golden sultanins which he charged me to give you." At this speech the cadi relaxed all his gravity; he could not help laughing, and, as we were alone, he took the purse without ceremony, dismissing me with these words: "Go, Master Sidy Hally, you did quite right in burying a dog with pomp and honour who had so much consideration for worthy men."

By this device I got off; and if it did not make me wiser, at least I became more circumspect. I indulged no more with the Arab, nor yet with the Jew; but chose for my boon companion a young gentleman from Leghorn, my slave, whose name was Azarini. I was not like other renegades, who are more severe to Christian slaves than the Turks themselves are. All my captives waited patiently to be ransomed. In fact, I treated them so gently, that they sometimes assured me they feared a change of master more than they longed for liberty, great as are its charms for the enslaved.

On one occasion the bashaw's vessels came into port with considerable prizes. They brought more than a hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had carried off from the Spanish coasts. Soliman only kept a few, and all the rest were exposed for sale. I happened to go to the market-place where the sale was proceeding, and bought a Spanish girl about ten or twelve years old, who was weeping

bitterly, and looked a picture of despair. I was surprised to see at her age that captivity made such an impression on her. I told her in Spanish to moderate her grief, and assured her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who was not wanting in humanity, although he wore a turban. The little one, still engrossed by her sorrow, did not hear me. She did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and exclaim from time to time in a piteous manner: "O mother! why were we ever parted? I could bear my lot with patience if we were together." Whilst uttering these words she looked towards a woman of forty-five or fifty, who stood not far from her, and who, with downcast eyes, waited in dismal silence until some purchaser should arrive. I asked the young girl if the woman she was looking at was her mother. "Alas, she is, sir!" she replied, "for Heaven's sake do not part us!" "Well, child," I said, "if you cannot be consoled without being both united again, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time I went up to the mother in order to bid for her; but I had no sooner cast my eyes on her face than I recognised, with what emotion you may judge, the very features of Lucinda! "Just Heaven," I said to myself, "this is my mother, beyond doubt!" As for her, whether it was that an acute sense of her misfortunes made her see none but enemies in all who surrounded her,

or whether my dress disguised me, or that I was much changed in the dozen years since I last saw her, she did not recognise me. Having bought her also, I took her with her daughter to my house.

There I wished to give them the pleasure of learning who I was. "Madam," I said to Lucinda, "is it possible that my features do not strike you? Do my mustache and my turban prevent you from recognising your son Raphael?" My mother started at these words, gazed at me, recollected me, and we embraced each other affectionately. Then I embraced her daughter, who probably knew as much about having a brother as I did about having a sister. "Tell the truth," I said to my mother, "in all your stage plays, you have never met with such an extraordinary recognition as this." "Son," she replied, sighing, "I was at first rejoiced to see you, but my joy is converted into grief. Alas! in what state do I find you. My slavery is a thousand times less painful to me than the odious garments . . ." "Upon my word, madam," interrupted I, with a hearty laugh, "I admire your delicacy; I like that in an actress. Why, good Heaven, mother, you must be greatly changed if my metamorphosis pains you so deeply. Instead of being disgusted with my turban, consider me rather as an actor, performing a Turkish character on the stage. Though a renegade, I am

no more a Mussulman than I was in Spain ; and in my heart I always feel attached to my religion. When you shall know all the adventures which have happened to me in this country, you will excuse me. Love has been the cause of my apostasy ; it is the deity at whose shrine I worship. I take rather after yourself: take my word for it. Another reason besides should moderate your displeasure at seeing me under my present circumstances. You were expecting nothing in Algiers but a rigorous captivity ; and you find in your master a tender son, respectful, and wealthy enough to enable you to live here in comfort, until we can find an opportunity of returning to Spain in safety. Recognise the truth of the proverb which says that it is an ill wind which blows nobody good."

"Son," said Lucinda, "as you intend some day to return to your own country, and there to abjure Mahometanism, I am quite consoled. Thank Heaven," she continued, "I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatrix safe and sound to Castile." "Yes, madam," I exclaimed, "that you shall. We will all three go, as soon as possible, and rejoin the rest of our family, for I suppose you have left in Spain other evidences of your prolific powers?" "No," said my mother, "I have no other children but you two, let me tell you that Beatrix is the issue of a perfectly legitimate marriage."

“And pray,” I demanded, “why did you give my little sister this advantage over me? How could you ever make up your mind to marry? From my infancy I have heard you say a thousand times that you would never forgive a pretty woman for taking a husband.” “Circumstances alter cases, my son,” she replied; “men of the firmest resolution are liable to change, and you would have a woman be more constant in hers! I shall relate to you the history of my life,” she continued, “since your departure from Madrid.” Then she imparted to me the following narrative, which I shall never forget, and which is so interesting that I shall not withhold it from you.

“It is about thirteen years, if you recollect,” said my mother, “since you left young Leganez. About that time the Duke de Medina Celi told me that one evening he wished to sup with me in private. He fixed the day; I made preparations for his reception; he came, and I pleased him. He asked me to sacrifice to him whatever rivals he might have; and I consented in the hope of being well rewarded for it. He did not disappoint me. Next morning I received some presents from him, which were afterwards followed by several others. I was afraid of not being able to retain long in my fetters a man of such high rank, and I dreaded this the more because it was a matter of notoriety

that he had slipped out of the clutches of several celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broken as soon as he began to wear them. However, far from daily relishing less my favours, he seemed rather to discover a new delight in them. In short, I found out the secret of amusing him, and of preventing his naturally fickle heart from giving rein to its inclinations.

“ He had now been attached to me for three months, and I had every reason to flatter myself that his love would be enduring, when a lady of my acquaintance and myself went to an assembly where the duke was as well as his wife. It was a concert of vocal and instrumental music, and we accidentally seated ourselves rather near the duchess, who chose to take it ill that I should dare to appear in the same place with herself. She sent one of her women to request me to leave at once. I returned an insolent answer to the messenger, which irritated the duchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to me in person and said: ‘Leave the room, Lucinda; when noblemen of high rank attach themselves to inferior creatures like yourself, these latter should not, on that account, forget their position. If we love you better than our wives, we honour our wives more than you; therefore, whenever you are insolent enough to try and compare yourselves to them, you will

always have the mortification of being treated with indignity.'

"Happily the duke addressed this cruel speech to me in so low a tone as not to have been overheard by those people who were around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation at having suffered this affront. To add to my annoyance, the actors and actresses got hold of the story the very same night. One might suppose that those people keep a familiar spirit who delights in relating to some of them whatever happens to others. For instance, if an actor has made a fool of himself in a drinking bout, or if an actress has got hold of a rich gallant, the company is forthwith informed of it. All my comrades, therefore, knew what had happened at the concert, and Heaven knows how they made merry at my expense! A spirit of charity prevails amongst them, which is manifested on occasions of this sort. However, I held myself too high to be affected by their gossip, and consoled myself for the loss of the Duke de Medina Celi; for I never saw him more at my house, and I heard a few days later that an opera singer had made a conquest of him.

"When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be the fashion, lovers will never be wanting; and the love of a great nobleman, if it only lasts three days, lends her a new value. I found myself besieged by

adorers, as soon as it was spread abroad in Madrid that the duke had given up visiting me. The rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more smitten by my charms than ever, returned to my standard in crowds, to say nothing of a thousand other hearts ready to do me homage. I had never been so much the fashion. Of all the men who strove for my favours a portly German, belonging to the Duke of Ossuna's household, seemed to me to be one of the most enamoured. His personal charms were not very great; but he attracted my notice by a thousand pistoles, which he had scraped together in his master's service, and which he lavished to gain a place on the list of my favoured lovers. This worthy creature was called Brutandorf. As long as he spent money I received him favourably; as soon as he was ruined he found my door closed to him. My conduct displeased him. He came to look for me at the theatre, during a performance. I was behind the scenes; and he thought fit to load me with reproaches. I laughed in his face; he flew into a passion, and gave me a box on the ear, like a regular German. I uttered a loud cry, interrupted the piece, came forward to the front, and addressing the Duke of Ossuna, who was present on that occasion with his lady, the duchess, claimed satisfaction from him for the German behaviour of his attendant. The duke ordered the play to

proceed, and said he would hear both sides after the curtain had dropped. As soon as the play was over, I appeared before the duke, in great agitation, and expressed with much emotion my feelings at the insult offered to me. As for the German, he only spoke two words in his defence; he said that, instead of regretting what he had done, he was just the sort of man to repeat it. Both sides having been heard, the Duke of Ossuna said to the German: ‘Brutandorf, I dismiss you from my service, and forbid you ever to appear before me again; not for having given a box on the ear to an actress, but for your want of respect to your master and mistress, and for having dared to interrupt the play when they were present.’

“I took this sentence to heart. I was terribly annoyed because the German had not been dismissed for having insulted me. I fancied that such an outrage committed on an actress ought to have been as severely punished as an act of high treason, and I had made sure that the gentleman would have suffered some exemplary punishment. This unpleasant occurrence undeceived me, and made me understand that society does not confound actors with the parts they play. It disgusted me with the theatre. I resolved to abandon it, and to go and live far from Madrid. I fixed on the town of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and went thither incognita, with twenty

thousand ducats, partly in money and partly in jewels. This sum seemed to me more than sufficient to maintain me for the rest of my days, since I intended to lead a quiet life. At Valencia I took a small house, and engaged a female servant and a page, to whom I was as little known as I was to the rest of the town. I gave myself out as the widow of an officer in the king's household, and intimated that I had come to settle in Valencia as this place had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable in Spain. I saw very little company, and was so reserved in my conduct that no one suspected me of having been an actress. However, notwithstanding all the trouble I took not to be observed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman who dwelt in a castle near Paterna. He was rather a handsome man, of from thirty-five to forty years of age, a noble by birth but deeply in debt, which is not more uncommon in the kingdom of Valencia than in many other countries.

“ This hidalgo, taking a fancy to me, wished to know if I was suitable for him in other respects. He set spies to work to make enquiries, and had the pleasure of learning, from their report, that whilst I was a rather good-looking person I was a tolerably wealthy widow. Thereupon, concluding that I was just a match for him, he dispatched to me an old woman to tell me on his behalf that, being charmed by

my virtue as much as by my beauty, he offered me his hand and was ready to lead me to the altar, if I would condescend to become his wife. I asked three days to consider. I made enquiries about the gentleman; and the good character they gave him, although the state of his affairs was not concealed from me, determined me without hesitation to marry him shortly afterwards.

“Don Manuel de Xerica (for that was my husband’s name) took me at once to his seat, which had an air of antiquity, of which he was very proud. He asserted that one of his ancestors had had it built in days of yore, and thence he concluded that there was not a more ancient house in Spain than that of Xerica. But this fine evidence of nobility was on the point of being destroyed by time—the castle, propped up in several places, threatened to tumble to pieces. How fortunate it was that Don Manuel had married me! Half my money was employed in restorations, and the rest enabled us to live in good style in the neighbourhood. Behold me now, so to speak, in a new world, transformed into the residing genius of a castle and a lady of the manor! What a metamorphosis! I was too good an actress not to sustain well the splendour which my rank shed over me. I assumed airs of dignity, theatrical airs, which made the country people conceive a wonderful notion of my high birth.

How merry they would have made at my expense had they known the real truth of the case ! The nobility of the neighbourhood would have scoffed at me most unmercifully, and the peasants would have bated a good deal of the respect which they showed me.

“ I had lived nearly six years very happily with Don Manuel, when he died. He left me his affairs to unravel, and your sister Beatrix, who was then in her fifth year. The castle, which was our only possession, was unfortunately mortgaged to several creditors, the principal of whom was called Bernard Astuto.¹ How well he bore out his name ! He practised as an attorney at Valencia, and was a man of consummate skill in his profession, who had studied law with a view of committing injustice. What a terrible creditor he was ! A country-seat in the clutches of such a lawyer is like a dove in the claws of a kite ; and accordingly Señor Astuto, as soon as he was informed of my husband’s death, did not fail to besiege the castle. He would undoubtedly have blown it up by the mines that his chicanery began to dig, if my star had not intervened. My good fortune decreed that the besieger should become my slave. I charmed him in an interview I had with him on the subject of his litigation. I spared nothing, I own it frankly, to make him fall in love, and the desire of saving my estate

¹ *Astuto*, in Spanish, signifies “craft” or “cunning.”

made me try on him all those attractive arts which had often succeeded so well. With all my skill I was afraid I should be baffled by the lawyer. He was so engrossed in his business that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this sullen fellow, this pettifogger, this quill-driver looked at me with more pleasure than I expected. 'Madam,' he said to me, 'I do not know how to make love. I have always applied myself to my profession so closely that I have neglected to acquire the uses and customs of gallantry. I am not ignorant, however, of what is essential to love; and to come to the point, allow me to tell you that, if you can resolve to marry me, we shall make a bonfire of all the documents; I shall pack off the creditors who have combined with me to have your estate sold, and you shall receive its revenues, and your daughter shall have the reversion.' The interests of Beatrix and my own did not permit me to hesitate. I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his word. He turned his arms against the other creditors, and secured me the possession of my castle. It was perhaps the first time in his life that he had ever taken up the cause of the widow and the orphan.

"Thus I became an attorney's wife without ceasing to be a lady of the manor. But this new marriage ruined me in the eyes of the

gentry of Valencia. The ladies of rank looked upon me as a person who had lowered herself, and would no longer visit me. I was obliged to be content with a circle of citizens' wives, which at first caused me some annoyance, because I had been accustomed during the last six years to associate only with ladies of the higher classes. However, I soon consoled myself. I made the acquaintance of the wives of a registrar of the court and two attorneys, whose characters were very entertaining. There was something ridiculous in their manners which delighted me; these inferior creatures believed themselves quite out of the common. 'Alas!' I mused sometimes, when I saw them forgetting themselves, 'this is the way of the world. Everyone fancies himself above his neighbour. I thought actresses were the only people who forgot themselves; but it seems that citizens' wives are not a whit more rational. Just to punish them I should like them to be compelled to keep the portraits of their ancestors in their houses—they would scarcely hang them in the most conspicuous place.'

"After four years of married life, Señor Bernard Astuto fell ill, and died without issue. With the property which he had settled on me at our marriage, and that which I had before, I found myself a rich widow. And I had the reputation of being so; for, on hearing this

report, a Sicilian gentleman named Colifichini¹ resolved to attach himself to me, either to ruin or to marry me. The alternative was left to my own choice. He had come from Palermo to see Spain; and after having satisfied his curiosity, was waiting, he said, at Valencia for an opportunity of returning to Sicily. The gentleman was not quite twenty-five, was elegant though diminutive, and, in fact, his face made an impression on me. He contrived to speak to me in private; and I frankly will own it to you, that I fell over head and ears in love with him at our first interview. On his side the little fellow seemed quite captivated by my charms. I do really think, Heaven forgive me, that we should have been married straight off, if the death of the attorney, which was still quite recent, had permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon. But as I had acquired a taste for matrimony, I observed the decorum of society.

“ We agreed, therefore, to put off our marriage for some time, from motives of propriety. Meanwhile Colifichini paid me attentions; and his passion, far from growing less, seemed to become more ardent every day. The poor fellow was not too well off. I detected it, and he no longer stood in need of cash. Not only was I nearly twice his age, but I remembered

¹ *Colifichet* is the French for “a bauble.” Colifichini appears to be an Italianized form of this word.

that in my youthful days I had levied contributions on the men ; so that I regarded what I gave him as a sort of restitution which relieved my conscience. We waited, as patiently as we could, until the end of the period fixed by decorum for widows to marry again. When it arrived we presented ourselves before the altar, where we were linked together in indissoluble ties. Then we retired to my castle, and I can say that we lived there for two years less as married people than as tender lovers. But alas ! we were not to be long happy in our union : a pleurisy carried off my dear Colifichini."

At this passage in her history I interrupted my mother :—" What, madam, your third husband died also ! You must certainly be a very fatal tenement." " What would you have, my son ?" she replied. " Can I prolong the days which Heaven has numbered ? If I have lost three husbands, it was not my fault. I greatly regretted two of them. The attorney was the one I lamented least ; and as I had only married him for a consideration, I was easily consoled for my loss. But," she continued, " to return to Colifichini ; I was going to tell you that, a few months after his death, I desired to visit a country house near Palermo, which he had settled on me, as a jointure by our marriage contract. I took my passage for Sicily with my daughter, but we were captured

on the passage by the vessels of the bashaw of Algiers, and brought to this town. Fortunately for us, you chanced to be in the market-place when we were put up for sale. Had it been otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master who would have ill-treated us, and with whom we might perhaps have passed our whole life in slavery, without you ever having heard of us."

Such was my mother's narrative. After which, gentlemen, I gave her the best room in my house, with the freedom to live as she pleased, which was much to her taste. She had such a habit of loving, formed by so many repeated indulgences, that it was impossible for her to do without a gallant or a husband. She first cast her eyes on certain of my slaves; but Hally Pegelin, a Greek renegade, who sometimes came to my house, presently attracted her whole attention. She conceived for him a stronger passion than she had ever felt for Colifichini, and she was so well trained to please men that she discovered the secret of charming this man also. I pretended not to notice their good understanding; I thought of nothing but returning to Spain. The bashaw had already given me permission to fit out a vessel for a piratical cruise, and this took up all my time. Eight days before the ship was ready I said to Lucinda, "Madam, we shall take our leave of Algiers in a very short time; we shall set our

eyes no more on this place which you detest."

My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless. I was very surprised at this. "What do I perceive?" I said to her. "Whence comes it that your countenance betrays alarm? You seem to be sad instead of being pleased. I thought I was giving you welcome news in telling you that everything was ready for your departure. Do you no longer wish to go back to Spain?" "No, my son," she answered, "I no longer wish it. I have had so much trouble there that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear?" I exclaimed sorrowfully. "Ah! rather admit that it is love which weans you from your native country. What a change, just Heavens! When you came to this town, every object that met your eyes was hateful to you, but Hally Pegelin has put you into another humour." "I do not deny it," replied Lucinda. "I love this renegade, and mean to take him for my fourth husband." "What an idea!" I broke in with horror; "you marry a Mussulman! you forget that you are a Christian woman, or rather you have never been such except in name. O, mother, what a future you raise before my eyes! You have resolved upon your ruin. You are going to do voluntarily what I only did under the pressure of necessity."

I said a great deal more to her to turn her

from her purpose, but my eloquence was all in vain: she had made up her mind. Not content with following her own unfortunate inclinations and leaving me to go and live with this renegade, she even wanted to take Beatrix with her. This I opposed. "Wretched Lucinda," I said, "if nothing is capable of restraining you, at least abandon yourself alone to the madness that possesses you. Though you are about to cast yourself over a precipice, do not drag an innocent young girl along with you." Lucinda went away without replying, and I thought that a remnant of reason might still enlighten her, and prevent her from obstinately requiring her daughter to be given up to her. How little did I know my mother! Two days afterwards one of my slaves said to me, "Sir take care of yourself. A slave of Pegelin's has just told me a secret of which you cannot too soon avail yourself. Your mother has changed her religion; and to punish you for having refused Beatrix to her she intends to acquaint the bashaw with your proposed flight." I did not doubt for a moment that Lucinda was the woman to do what my slave told me. The lady had given me many opportunities of studying her character, and it was evident to me that by dint of playing sanguinary parts in tragedies, she had familiarised herself with crime. She would have allowed me to be burned alive; and I do not believe she would

have been more affected by my death than by the catastrophe in a drama.

Therefore, I resolved not to neglect the warning given me by my slave, and made all the haste I could with my embarkation. I took several Turks on board, according to the practice of Algerian corsairs setting out on a cruise, but only engaged enough to prevent suspicion, and I left the port as soon as I could with all my slaves and my sister Beatrix. You may be sure I did not forget at the same time to bring away all the money and jewels I possessed, and which might be worth about six thousand ducats. When we were fairly out at sea we began by securing the Turks. We put them in chains without difficulty, as my slaves outnumbered them, and we had so favourable a wind that we reached the shores of Italy in a very short time. We arrived safely into the harbour of Leghorn, where I believe the whole town must have come out to see us land. The father of my slave Azarini was, by chance or from curiosity, amongst the spectators. He scanned the captives closely as they set foot on shore, but though his object was to discover his son, he did not expect to see him. What transports, what embraces took place, when they met and recognised each other!

As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old

man compelled me, as well as Beatrix, to go with him and stay in his house. I shall pass over in silence the thousand ceremonies I was obliged to go through to re-enter the bosom of the Church; suffice it to say that I abjured Mahometanism with much more sincerity than I had embraced it. After having completely purified myself of my Algerian infection, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty. As for the Turks, they were detained in the prisons of Leghorn to be exchanged for Christians. From both the Azarinis I received the kindest treatment; indeed, the young man married my sister Beatrix, who was no bad match for him, as she was the daughter of a nobleman, and owned the castle of Xerica, which my mother had taken care to let to a wealthy farmer of Paterna, when she resolved to go to Sicily.

After having stayed some time at Leghorn I went to Florence, a town which I desired to see. I did not go thither without letters of introduction. Azarini, the elder, had friends at the court of the Grand Duke,¹ and he introduced me to them as a Spanish gentleman, and one of his relatives. I prefixed "don" to my name, in imitation of many Spaniards sprung from the lower ranks, who assume this title of honour without compunction, when out of their own country. I therefore called myself Don

¹ Llorente pretends that the Grand Duke of Tuscany was at that time Ferdinand I. (1587-1609).

Raphael without blushing; and as I had brought from Algiers the means of worthily supporting my dignity, I made a brilliant appearance at court. The gentlemen to whom the elder Azarini had written in my favour, gave out that I was a person of rank, so that their testimony, and the airs I gave myself, enabled me to pass easily as a person of importance. I soon got to be hand in glove with the principal nobleman, who presented me to the Grand Duke. I had the good fortune to please him, and I applied myself to pay court to this prince and to study his character. I listened attentively when the oldest courtiers addressed him, and from what they said I discovered his inclinations. I observed amongst other things that he was fond of jokes, good stories and witticisms, and I regulated my conduct accordingly. Every morning I wrote down in my pocket-book such anecdotes as I proposed to tell him during the day. I knew a large number, and had, so to say, a bag full of them. But however I might economise them, my bag became gradually emptied, so that I should have been obliged to repeat myself, or to let him see that I was at an end of my stock, if my talent, fertile in fiction, had not furnished me with a fresh supply. I invented gallant and funny stories which vastly pleased the Grand Duke; and, as often happens with professed jesters, I used to put down witticisms in my pocket-book in the

mórníng, which I brought out as *impromptus* in the afternoon.

I even set up for a poet, and devoted my muse to the praise of the prince. I must admit candidly that my verses were not good, but they were never criticised; and, even if they had been better, I doubt whether they would have been more favourably received by the Grand Duke. He seemed much pleased by them. Perhaps the subject prevented him from thinking them feeble. Be that as it may, the prince gradually took such a liking for me that it gave offence to the courtiers. They tried to discover who I was; but they did not succeed. They only learnt that I had been a renegade; and they did not fail to tell the prince of it, in the hope of doing me an injury. However, they were disappointed; for the Grand Duke one day made me give him a faithful account of my voyage to Algiers; I obeyed him; and my adventures, which I told him, without any reserve on my part, amused him excessively.

“Don Raphael,” he said to me, after I had ended my story, “I like you, and I will give you a proof of it that will not permit you to doubt it. Henceforth you are admitted into all my secrets, and to give you an instance of my confidence, you are to know that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most enchanting lady at my court, but at

the same time the most virtuous. Shut up in her own household, exclusively attached to a husband who worships her, she seems to be ignorant of the agitation which her charms cause in Florence. You may easily fancy the difficulty of such a conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has now and then listened to my sighs. I have discovered a means of speaking to her in private. She is not unacquainted with my sentiments. I do not flatter myself that I have inspired her with love; she has given me no cause to entertain such an agreeable idea; but yet I do not despair of pleasing her by my constancy, and by the discreet conduct which I shall take care to pursue.

“My passion for this lady,” he continued, “is known to her alone. Instead of following my inclination without restraint, and acting as an absolute sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my love from everyone. I think I owe this delicacy to Mascarini, the husband of her whom I love. His zeal and attachment for me, his services and his probity, oblige me to act with much secrecy and circumspection. I do not desire to plunge a dagger into the breast of this unfortunate husband by declaring myself the suitor of his wife. I would have him ignorant for ever, if it be possible, of the ardour by which I am consumed; for I am convinced he would die of grief if he knew what I am just

now confiding to you. Therefore I conceal my advances, and have determined to avail myself of your services in order to express to Lucretia all the pangs which I suffer by my self-imposed restraint. You shall be the interpreter of my sentiments; I have no doubt that you will acquit yourself admirably of this commission. Cultivate Mascarini's acquaintance; exert yourself to win his affection; get introduced into his house, and contrive to speak to his wife. This is what I expect from you, and what I feel assured you will perform with all the skill and discretion which such a delicate task demands."

I promised the Grand Duke to do all my utmost to justify his confidence, and to contribute to the success of his passion. I kept my word without loss of time, and spared no pains to please Mascarini. I attained my end without trouble. Delighted to see his friendship courted by a man who was a favourite of the prince, he met my advances half-way. His house was always open to me; I had free access to his wife; and I will venture to say that I bore myself so well that he had not the least suspicion of the negociation with which I was entrusted. It is true that he was not very jealous for an Italian, relying on the virtue of his Lucretia; so that he often shut himself up in his study and left me alone with her. From the first I acted quickly. I spoke to the

lady of the Grand Duke's passion, and told her that I came to her solely to plead for that prince. She did not seem to be over head and ears in love with him, and yet I saw that vanity prevented her from rejecting his advances. She took a pleasure in listening to them, without feeling any inclination to respond to them. She was virtuous, but she was a woman; and I observed that her virtue was gradually giving way to the proud idea of having a sovereign in her fetters. In short, the prince might reasonably flatter himself that, without employing the violence of Tarquin, he would see Lucretia submit to his love. However, an incident which he could least have foreseen destroyed his expectations, as you shall learn.

I am naturally free and easy with women; I contracted this habit, be it a good or a bad one, amongst the Turks. Lucretia was handsome; I forgot that I ought only to play the character of ambassador, and spoke on my own account. I made love to the lady in the most gallant fashion possible. Instead of appearing shocked at my audacity, and answering me with anger, she said to me smiling:—“ You must confess, Don Raphael, that the Grand Duke has chosen a very faithful and zealous agent, who serves him with an integrity which cannot be sufficiently commended.” “ Madam,” I said in the same tone,

“let us not go into the matter too scrupulously. A truce, I beseech you, to reflections. I am well aware that yours are not favourable to me; but my feelings have got the better of me. After all, I do not think I am the first confidant of a prince who has betrayed his master in an affair of gallantry. Great lords often have dangerous rivals in their love-messengers.” “That may be,” replied Lucretia, “but I am proud, and none but a prince shall ever touch my heart. Shape your conduct accordingly,” she continued, resuming a serious tone, “and let us change the subject. I will gladly forget what you have said to me, provided you will never address me again in that style: otherwise you might regret it.”

Although this was a warning by which I ought to have profited, I did not cease to speak of my passion to Mascarini's wife. I even pressed her with more importunity than at first to respond to my tenderness, and I was rash enough to try and take liberties. Then the lady, taking offence at my words and my Mussulman manners, came to an open quarrel with me. She threatened to inform the Grand Duke of my insolence, assuring me that she would ask him to punish me as I deserved. I in my turn was stung by these threats. My love turned to hatred; I resolved to be avenged for the contempt with which Lucretia had treated me. I went to her husband, and

after making him take an oath not to betray me, I told him of the understanding between his wife and the prince, and failed not to describe her as very much in love with the latter, in order to give an additional interest to the scene. The minister, to avoid accidents, at once shut up his wife in a secret apartment, under the strict guard of persons whom he could trust. While she was surrounded by spies watching her carefully, who prevented her from communicating with the Grand Duke, I informed that prince, with a melancholy air, that he must think no longer of Lucretia. I told him that Mascarini had doubtless discovered all, since he had taken it into his head to set a watch on his wife ; that I knew not what could have induced him to suspect me, inasmuch as I believed I had always acted with much skill. The lady might herself, I suggested, have confessed everything to her husband, and, in collusion with him, have allowed herself to be shut up to avoid those importunities so alarming to her virtue. The prince seemed so deeply distressed at this information, that I was touched by his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done ; but it was too late. Besides, I own that I felt a spiteful pleasure when I pictured the position to which I had brought the proud beauty who had despised my suit.

I was tasting with impunity the pleasure of vengeance, so sweet to all, and especially to

Spaniards, when one day the Grand Duke, being with five or six noblemen of his court and myself, said to us, "How do you think a man ought to be punished who has abused the confidence of his prince, and sought to deprive him of his mistress?" "He ought to be torn to pieces by four horses," said one. Another was of opinion that he should be cudgelled to death. The least cruel of these Italians, whose decision was the most favourable to the culprit, said he would be content with having him thrown from the top of a tower to the bottom. "And what is the opinion of Don Raphael?" resumed the Grand Duke. "I am convinced that the Spaniards are not less severe than the Italians on such occasions."

As you may well suppose, I fully understood that Mascarini had not kept his oath, or that his wife had found means to inform the prince of what had passed between her and me. My countenance sufficiently betokened the emotion which agitated me. But, disconcerted as I was, I answered the Grand Duke in a steady tone of voice: "My lord, the Spaniards are more generous. In such a case they would pardon the confidant, and thus kindle in his soul an eternal remorse for having betrayed them." "Well!" said the prince, "I feel that I am capable of such generosity; I pardon the traitor, since I have only myself to blame for having granted my confidence to a man whom I did

not know, and whom I had reason to mistrust, after all that had been told to me concerning him. Don Raphael," he added; "thus will I be avenged on you: leave my dominions instantly, and never let me see your face again." I at once withdrew, less grieved at my disgrace than delighted at having got off so easily; and embarked next morning in a vessel which was returning from Leghorn to Barcelona.

At this point of his story I interrupted Don Raphael. "For a man of intelligence," I said, "it seems to me that you committed a great mistake in not quitting Florence immediately after revealing to Mascarini the love of the prince for Lucretia. You might well have foreseen that the Grand Duke would soon be informed of your treason." "I agree with you," replied the son of Lucinda, "and indeed, not trusting to the assurance which the minister had given me that he would not expose me to the resentment of the prince, I intended to disappear at the earliest opportunity."

I reached Barcelona, continued he, with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algiers, the greater part of which I had squandered at Florence in enacting the Spanish nobleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia. I was very anxious once more to see Madrid, my dear native city, and I gratified this longing desire as soon as I could. On my arrival in town I happened to take apartments in a

boarding-house where a lady named Camilla was residing. Though she was no longer in her teens, she was a most engaging creature, as Señor Gil Blas will bear me out in saying, for he saw her at Valladolid about the same time. Her intelligence was even greater than her beauty; and never was adventuress more skilful in decoying dupes. But she was not like those coquettes¹ who hoard up the bounty of their lovers. If she had just fleeced a man of business she shared his spoils with the first sharper she took a fancy to.

We loved each other at first sight, and the sympathy of our dispositions united us so closely that we soon kept a joint purse. The truth is, we had not a very full one, and we emptied it in a short time. Unfortunately we both thought only of our own pleasure, without making the slightest use of our talents for living at other people's expense. Poverty at last aroused our genius, which pleasure had dulled. "My dear Raphael, my friend," Camilla said to me, "let us carry the war into the enemy's quarters, and no longer maintain a fidelity which is ruining us. You can turn the head of a rich widow, and I may get into the good graces of some old nobleman; but if we continue to be faithful to one another neither of us will make his fortune!" "Lovely Camilla," I replied, "you anticipate me. I was about to

¹ See Vol. I., book iii., page 237, note 1.

make the same proposal to you ; I consent to your scheme, my queen. Yes, the better to maintain our mutual flame, let us attempt conquests which may be of some advantage to us. The infidelities which we shall commit will become our triumphs."

Having made this compact, we took the field. We gave ourselves at first a great deal of trouble, without being able to find what we sought. Camilla only came across dandies, which presupposes them to be gallants without a penny in their pocket ; and I only met with ladies who liked to levy contributions better than to pay them. As love left us in the lurch, we tried rogueries ; of which we each performed so many that the corregidor heard of it ; and this magistrate, who was undeniably severe, sent one of his alguazils to arrest us. But this alguazil, as kind as the corregidor was stern, gave us time to get out of Madrid in return for a small sum which we bestowed upon him.¹ We set out for Valladolid, and established ourselves in that town. There I rented a house where I lived with Camilla, whom I represented as my sister, to avoid scandal. At first we kept a bridle on our industry, and began by reconnoitring the ground before undertaking any operations.

One day a man accosted me in the street,

¹ This confirms the venality of the alguazils of Madrid, for which see also Vol. I., book iii., page 233, note 2.

saluted me very politely, and said :—" Worthy Don Raphael, do you remember me ?" I answered in the negative. " But I," he replied, " remember you perfectly. I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I was then one of the Grand Duke's guard. A few months ago I left that prince's service, and came into Spain with a very shrewd Italian. We have been these three weeks in Valladolid, and are living with a Castilian and a Galician, who are, beyond contradiction, two of the best fellows in the world. We support ourselves by the labour of our hands, fare well, and amuse ourselves like princes. If you will join us, you shall be well received by my companions ; for you always seemed to me a man of mettle, above all vulgar prejudices ; in short, a monk of our order."

The frankness of the rogue called forth mine. " As you speak openly to me," I said, " you deserve that I should do the same by you. In good truth I am no novice in your profession ; and if my modesty would allow me to relate my exploits, you would be convinced that you have not formed too high an opinion of me. But I dispense with self-praise, and shall only say that, in accepting the place you offer me in your company, I will neglect nothing to prove to you that I am not unworthy of it." I had no sooner told my ambidexterous friend that I was

willing to increase the number of his comrades than he led me to their place of meeting, where I made their acquaintance. It was here I first met the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela. These gentlemen questioned me on the art of skilfully appropriating the property of one's neighbour. They wished to know whether I was well grounded; but I showed them many card-tricks of which they were ignorant, and which excited their admiration. They were still more astonished when, making light of my sleight of hand, as a too commonplace matter, I told them that I excelled in rogueries which required intelligence. In order to convince them of this, I related my adventure with Jerome de Moyadas; and on merely hearing it they conceived my genius to be of so high an order that they unanimously chose me for their captain. Their choice was fully justified by the number of knaveries which we performed, and of which I was, as it were, the mainspring. When we wanted a female performer to second us, we had recourse to Camilla, who played to perfection all the parts we assigned her.

About this time our brother Ambrose was seized with a longing to see his native country once more. He left for Galicia, assuring us that we might reckon on his return. He satisfied his longing; and as he was returning, and halting at Burgos, for the purpose of doing some business there, an innkeeper of his

acquaintance put him into the service of Señor Gil Blas of Santillana, whose history he did not forget to tell him. Señor Gil Blas, Don Raphael continued, addressing me, you know how we robbed you at a lodging-house in Valladolid. Doubtless you suspected Ambrose of having been the principal instrument in this robbery, and you were right. He came to us as soon as he arrived, told us every particular of your situation, and the worthy plotters took their measures accordingly. But as you do not know the sequel of this adventure, I will tell it you. Ambrose and myself carried off your portmanteau; and, mounted on your mules, we set out for Madrid, without troubling ourselves about Camilla and our comrades, who were no doubt as much surprised as you not to see us again next morning.

We changed our plan on the day after. Instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without reason, we passed through Zebreros, and went on as far as Toledo. Our first care, in this town, was to dress handsomely; then, representing ourselves as two brothers from Galicia, travelling for curiosity, we soon got acquainted with a number of very respectable people. I was so accustomed to play the man of quality that they were easily deceived; and as people are generally dazzled by expenditure, we threw dust into everyone's eyes by the elegant entertainments to which

we invited the ladies. Amongst the women whom I saw there was one who touched my heart. She seemed prettier than Camilla, and much younger. I wanted to know who she was; and learned that her name was Violante, and that she had married a gentleman who, already tired of her embraces, sought those of a courtesan with whom he was in love. There was no need to say anything more to determine me to enthrone Violante as the sovereign lady of my thoughts.

She was not long in discovering her conquest. I began by following her everywhere, and committed a hundred follies to persuade her that I asked nothing better than to console her for the infidelities of her husband. The fair one thought over the subject, and her reflections were such that I at length had the pleasure of knowing that my intentions were approved. I received a note from her, in answer to several that had been conveyed to her by one of these old women who are of such vast utility in Spain and in Italy. The lady sent me word that her husband took supper with his mistress every evening, and did not return home until very late. I understood what this meant. On that very night I went under Violante's window, with whom I had a most tender conversation. Before separating we agreed to converse every night at the same hour and in the same manner, without prejudice to any other acts of gallantry

which we might be able to perform during the day.

So far Don Balthazar, as Violante's husband was called, had got off cheaply ; but I was no Platonic lover, and one evening I went to the lady's window, with the intention of telling her that I could exist no longer without meeting her in some place more suited to the excess of my affections—a favour which I had not yet been able to persuade her to grant me. But, as I was going thither, I perceived in the street a man who seemed to be watching me. It was in fact the husband returning from his courtesan's earlier than usual, and who, seeing a gentleman near his house, walked up and down the street instead of entering. I remained for some time uncertain what to do. At last I resolved to address Don Balthazar, whom I did not know, and by whom I was not known. "Worthy sir," I said to him, "I beg you to let me have the street clear for this one night, I will do the same for you another time." "Señor," he replied, "I was just going to make the same request to you. I am in love with a girl whose brother watches her carefully, and who lives not twenty yards from here ; and I should like no one to be in the street." "There is a way," I replied, "of satisfying both of us without inconvenience ; for," I added, pointing to his own house, "the lady whom I serve, lives there ; we better

assist each other if either of us be attacked.” “With all my heart,” he replied. “I will go to my assignation, and we will back one another if need be.” With these words he left me, though only to watch me more narrowly, which the darkness of the night enabled him easily to do.

As for me, I approached unsuspectingly Violante’s balcony. She soon appeared, and we began to converse. I did not fail to press the idol of my worship to grant me a secret interview in some private place. She resisted my entreaties for a while, in order to increase the value of the favour which I asked; at length she took a note out of her pocket, threw it down to me, and said, “Catch it; you will find in that letter the promise about which you importune me so much.” Then she withdrew, because the hour at which her husband generally returned was approaching. I secured the note, and advanced to the spot where Don Balthazar had told me that his business lay. But that husband, who had plainly seen that I made love to his own wife, came forward and said, “Well, sir, are you satisfied with your good fortune?” “I have reason to be so,” I replied. “And as for yourself, what have you done? Has love favoured you?” “Alas, no,” he replied, “the cursed brother of the fair one I love has returned from a country house, from which we thought he would not come back till to-morrow.

This mischance has deprived me of the pleasure I had anticipated."

Don Balthazar and I exchanged protestations of friendship, and arranged to meet next morning in the great square. After we had parted the gentleman betook himself to his house, but did not tell Violante that he knew of her proceedings. On the following day he was in the square, and I arrived a few minutes after him. We exchanged greetings amidst demonstrations of friendship as perfidious on one side as they were sincere on the other. In the course of conversation the cunning Don Balthazar pretended to take me into his confidence, respecting his intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned to me on the preceding night. He told me a long story which he had concocted, and all this to induce me to tell him in my turn by what means I had got acquainted with Violante. I did not fail to fall into the trap, and confessed everything with the greatest possible candour. I even showed him the note which I had received from her, and read to him the following words: "I am going to dine to-morrow with Donna Inez. You know where she lives. In the house of this faithful friend I mean to have a private interview with you. I can no longer refuse you that favour which you seem to deserve."

"That," said Don Balthazar, "is a note which promises you the reward of your passion. I

congratulate you beforehand on the good luck which awaits you." Whilst saying this he could not help being a little disconcerted, but he easily concealed his trouble from my eyes. I was so puffed up by my anticipations that I scarcely thought of looking at my confidant, who, however, was obliged to leave me for fear of betraying his agitation at last. He ran to acquaint his brother-in-law with this strange occurrence. I do not know what passed between them. All I know is that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door of Donna Inez whilst I was there with Violante. We were warned who it was, so I got out of a back door before he had come in. As soon as I had disappeared, the ladies, whom the unexpected arrival of the husband had somewhat disturbed, recovered their presence of mind, and received him with so much assurance that he suspected they had hidden me, or allowed me to escape. I cannot tell you what he said to Donna Inez and his wife; that is a matter which never came to my knowledge.

In the meantime, without yet suspecting that I was the dupe of Don Balthazar, I went out, cursing him, and returned to the public square, where I had appointed Lamela to meet me. I did not find him there. He also had his little affairs, and the rogue was more fortunate than myself. Whilst I was waiting for him, I saw my perfidious confidant approaching with a cheer-

ful manner. He came up to me, and asked me, laughing, about my interview with my nymph at Donna Inez's. "I don't know," I said, "what evil spirit, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them; but just as I was alone with my lady, pressing her to complete my happiness, her husband, whom Heaven confound, came knocking at the door of the house. I was obliged at once to think of escaping. I made off by a back door, wishing the troublesome fellow who had interrupted my plans to the deuce." "I am truly sorry for it," exclaimed Don Balthazar, secretly delighted to see my annoyance. "What a nuisance of a husband! I would advise you to give him no quarter." "O, I will follow your advice," I replied, "and I can assure you his honour shall receive its death-blow this very night. His wife told me when I was leaving, not to be cast down for such a trifle; but not to fail to be at her window earlier than usual; that she was resolved to admit me into her house, but, as a precaution, at all events, to come accompanied by two or three friends for fear of surprise." "What a prudent lady!" said he. "Allow me to accompany you." "Ah! my dear friend," I exclaimed, transported with joy, and throwing my arms about Don Balthazar's neck, "I am very much obliged to you!" "I will do more," he replied. "One of my acquaintances, a young fellow who is a regular Cæsar, shall

be one of the party, and then you can boldly rely on having a sufficient escort."

I did not know with what words to thank my new friend, so delighted was I by this zeal. To be brief, I accepted the assistance which he offered me; and making an appointment with him to meet me at dusk under Violante's balcony, we separated. He went to his brother-in-law, who was the Cæsar in question; and I walked about until evening with Lamela, who, though astonished at the ardour with which Don Balthazar entered into my interests, did not mistrust him more than I did. We fell into the snare, which, I admit, was scarcely pardonable in men like ourselves. When I thought it was time to present myself under Violante's windows, Ambrose and I made our appearance, armed with good rapiers. There we found the husband of my fair with another man awaiting us on the appointed spot. Don Balthazar accosted me, and pointing to his brother-in-law, said, "Señor, this is the gentleman whose bravery I have been extolling to you. Make the best of your way into your mistress's house, and let no uneasiness prevent you from enjoying perfect felicity."

After a mutual interchange of compliments I knocked at Violante's door, which was opened by a sort of duenna. I went in; and without heeding what passed behind me, entered

the room where the lady was. Whilst I was saluting her, the two traitors who had followed me into the house, and had banged the door so violently after them that Ambrose was left in the street, made their appearance. You may easily imagine that I had to use the sword. They fell upon me at the same time; but I gave them a warm reception; and kept them both at it in such a fashion that they probably repented of not having chosen a more certain way of avenging themselves. The husband was run through the body; and his brother-in-law, seeing him down, made for the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape whilst we were fighting. I pursued him into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who, not having been able to get a single word out of the women whom he had seen running away, hardly knew what to think of the noise he had just heard. We returned to our inn, packed up our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, left the town without waiting for daylight.

It was quite evident that this business would not end thus, and that a hue and cry would be set up in Toledo, which we would do well to anticipate. We stopped that night at Villarubia. Some time after our arrival there came to our inn a tradesman of Toledo, on his way to Segorbia. We supped with him, and he related to us the tragical adventure of Violante's hus-

band. He was so far from suspecting us to be concerned in it that we boldly asked him all sorts of particulars. "Gentlemen," he said, "as I was leaving this morning I heard of this sad accident. They were looking everywhere for Violante; and I was told that the corregidor, who is a relative of Don Balthazar, has made up his mind to spare no pains in order to discover the authors of this murder. That is all I know about it."

The investigations of the corregidor of Toledo gave me very little uneasiness. However I determined to leave New Castile at once. It occurred to me that Violante, when found, would confess all, and that, after the description she might give to the police of my person, people would be sent in pursuit of me. The next day, therefore, we took the precaution of avoiding the high road. Fortunately Lamela was acquainted with three-fourths of Spain, and knew by what bye-ways we could reach Aragon in safety. Instead of going straight to Cuença we kept among the mountains, which are to be met with before entering this town; and by paths, with which my guide was well acquainted, we reached a grotto, which seemed to me exactly like a hermitage. In point of fact, it was the very place whither you came last night, asking me for shelter.

Whilst I was gazing at the country around, which presented to my view a most beautiful

landscape, my companion said:—"I passed by here six years ago. At that time this grotto afforded a retreat to an old hermit, who gave me a charitable reception, and shared his food with me. I remember that he was a holy man, and spoke to me in such a manner as almost to wean me from the world. Perhaps he is still living; I will go and see." Whilst saying these words the inquisitive Ambrose alighted from his mule and entered the hermitage. He remained there for a few moments, and then returned and said to me:—"Come hither, Don Raphael, come and see something very touching." I immediately dismounted. We tied our mules to some trees, and I followed Lamela into the grotto, where I saw an old hermit stretched on a pallet at full length, pale, and at the point of death. A white and very bushy beard hung down to his middle, and in his clasped hands he held entwined a large rosary. At the noise which we made as we approached him, he opened his eyes, already half closed in death, and after looking at us for a moment, said:—"Whoever you are, my brethren, profit by the spectacle which now presents itself before your eyes. I have spent forty years in the world and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long at this moment seems the time which I have spent in pleasures, and, on the contrary, how short that which I have devoted to penance! Alas! I

fear that the austerities of Brother Juan have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the licentiate Don Juan de Solis."

No sooner had he finished these words than he expired. We were very much struck by this death. Such incidents always impress even the greatest libertines, but we were not long affected by the scene. We soon forgot what he had been saying to us, and began making an inventory of what the hermitage contained. This did not take a long time, for all the furniture consisted of what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother Juan was not only badly provided with furniture, but he had also a very poor larder. We found no other provisions than a few hard nuts, and some very stale crusts of barley bread, which the holy man's gums had apparently not been able to masticate. I say his gums, because we noticed that he had lost all his teeth. The whole contents of this solitary abode, and every object that met our eyes, made us look on this good anchorite as a saint. Only one thing staggered us: we opened a paper folded like a letter, lying on the table, wherein he besought whomsoever might read the note to carry his rosary and sandals to the bishop of Cuença. We knew not what was this new father of the desert's¹ intention, by sending such a pre-

¹ "Father of the Desert" was the name given to St Anthony, who lived in a solitary cell in the Egyptian desert for nearly twenty years.

sent to his bishop. It seemed to us to be derogatory to his humility, and the act of a man who wished to set up for a saint. And yet perhaps it was mere simplicity. It is a question on which I shall express no opinion.

As we were conversing on this subject, a rather amusing idea entered Lamela's head. "Let us stay in this hermitage," he said, "and disguise ourselves as hermits. We will bury Brother Juan; you shall personate him, and I, under the name of Brother Anthony, will beg in the neighbouring towns and villages. We shall be safe against the search of the corregidor, for I scarcely think they will dream of coming here to look for us. Besides, I have some acquaintances at Cuença, whom we may cultivate." I fell in with this quaint idea, not so much for the reasons which Ambrose had mentioned, as because it took my fancy, and I wanted to act a part in a play. We dug a grave about thirty or forty yards from the grotto, and there decently buried the old anchorite, after having stripped him of his garments—to wit, a simple gown fastened round his middle with a leather girdle. We also cut off his beard to make a false one for me; and finally, after his funeral, we took possession of the hermitage.

We had very bad cheer on the first day, being obliged to live on the provisions of the deceased; but next day, before sunrise, Lamela set out with the two mules, to sell them at

Toralva, and in the evening returned laden with provisions and other articles which he had purchased. He brought all that was needed for our disguise. He made himself a gown of drugget, and a little red horse-hair beard, which he fixed to his ears so skilfully that one would have sworn it was natural. There is not a cleverer fellow in the world. He also wove the beard of Brother Juan, which he fitted on to my face ; my brown woollen cap completed the masquerade, so that we could boast that nothing was wanting to disguise us. We thought each other so ludicrously equipped, that we could not help laughing on seeing ourselves in these garments, which, in truth, were but little suited to our characters. Besides the gown of Brother Juan, I had also his rosary and sandals, of which I did not scruple to deprive the bishop of Cuença.

We had already been three days in the hermitage without seeing a single person ; but on the fourth two countrymen entered the grotto. They brought bread, cheese, and onions for the deceased, whom they supposed to be still alive. As soon as I perceived them I threw myself on the pallet, and had no trouble in deceiving them, for it was not light enough to distinguish my features accurately, and besides I imitated Brother Juan's voice as well as I could, as I had heard his last words. They had no suspicion of the deception ; though they seemed

astonished at finding another hermit there. But Lamela, observing their surprise, said to them, in a canting tone—"My brethren, be not surprised at seeing me in this solitude. I have left a hermitage of my own in Aragon, to come hither and be a companion to the venerable and edifying Brother Juan, who, in his advanced age, needs some one to attend to his wants." The rustics praised the charity of Ambrose to the skies, and congratulated themselves on being able to boast of having two holy men residing in their neighbourhood.

Lamela, laden with a large wallet, which he had not forgotten among the number of his purchases, set off for the first time to beg in the town of Cuença, which is hardly a league from the hermitage. With the devout appearance, which he has received from nature, and that talent for making the most of it which he possesses in a high degree, he could not fail in moving charitable persons to bestow alms on him. He filled his wallet with their liberal gifts. "Master Ambrose," I said to him on his return, "I congratulate you on the happy talent you possess of softening the souls of all good Christians. Egad! one would think you had been a mendicant friar among the Capuchins." "I have done something else besides filling my wallet," he replied. "You must know that I have discovered a certain lass named Barbara, whom I formerly loved.

I found her a good deal changed; for she has turned pious like ourselves, and lives with two or three other sanctified women, who edify the world in public, and lead scandalous lives in private. She did not recognise me at first. 'What?' I said, 'Mistress Barbara, is it possible you do not remember one of your old friends, your servant Ambrose?' 'Upon my word, Señor de Lamela,' she cried, 'I should never have expected to see you in this garb. What led you to become a hermit?' 'That is more than I can tell you just now,' I replied. 'The details are rather long, but I will come and satisfy your curiosity to-morrow evening. Nay, more, I shall bring my companion, Brother Juan along with me.' Brother Juan! she interrupted, the good hermit who dwells in a hermitage near this town? You don't mean it! He is supposed to be more than a hundred years old.' 'It is true,' I rejoined, 'that he was of that age, but he has grown a good deal younger within the last few days. He is at present not much older than I am.' 'Well,' replied Barbara, 'let him come with you. I perceive there is some mystery in the case.'"

On the morrow, as soon as it was dark, we did not fail to visit these pious ladies, who, to make our reception the more agreeable, had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for us. We first took off our beards and hermit's dress,

and told these princesses who we were, without any squeamishness. They, on their side, for fear of being outdone in candour, showed us what pretended devotees are capable of when they throw off their masks. We spent the greater part of the night at table, and did not return to our grotto until near daybreak. We were not long in repeating our visit; indeed, we did the same thing for three months, and spent with these creatures more than two thirds of our money. But a jealous rival discovered the whole affair, and gave information to the officers of justice, who this very day were to pay a visit to the grotto to arrest us. Yesterday Ambrose, whilst begging at Cuença, met one of our devotees, who gave him a note, saying:—"A female friend of mine wrote me this letter, which I was about to send to you by a messenger. Show it to Brother Juan, and take your measures accordingly." It was this note, gentlemen, which Lamela put into my hands in your presence, and which caused us so suddenly to quit our solitary abode.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSULTATION HELD BY DON RAPHAEL AND HIS FRIENDS, AND THE ADVENTURE WHICH BEFEL THEM WHEN THEY WERE PREPARING TO LEAVE THE WOOD.

WHEN Don Raphael had ended his narrative, which I thought rather long, Don Alphonso, out of politeness, assured him that it had greatly diverted him. Then Ambrose had something to say, and addressing the companion of his adventures, told him : "Don Raphael, consider that the sun is setting. I think it would not be amiss to deliberate on what we are to do." "You are right," his comrade answered ; we must settle where we think of going." "For my part," resumed Lamela, "I propose we continue our journey without loss of time, reach Requena to-night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will set our ingenuity to work. I have a presentiment that we shall do well there." His confederate, who thought his presentiments in that line infallible, shared his opinion. As for Don Alphonso and myself, as we had given ourselves into the charge of these two worthy gentlemen, we silently awaited the result of the conference.

Thus it was resolved that we should make for Requena, and we began to prepare for the

journey. We made another meal like the one we had had in the morning, and then put the leathern wine-bag and the remainder of our provisions on the horse's back. After this, as the night now coming on brought us the darkness which we needed to travel in safety, we were for quitting the wood; but we had not gone a hundred steps when we perceived a light among the trees, which gave us matter for reflection. "What can be the meaning of that?" said Don Raphael; "are these the bloodhounds of justice from Cuença who have got on to our track, and, supposing us to be in this forest, are come to look for us?" "I don't think so," replied Ambrose; "they are more likely travellers, whom the night has overtaken, and who have entered the forest to wait till daybreak. But," he added, "I may be mistaken; I will go and reconnoitre. You three stop here; I will be back directly." With these words he advanced towards the light, which was at no great distance, and drew near it very stealthily. He gently removed the foliage and branches which impeded his progress, and peered out with all the attention which the occasion seemed to demand. Four men were seated on the grass, around a candle stuck into a sod, and were just finishing a meat pie, and emptying a good-sized leathern bottle, which they put their lips to in turn. At a short distance from them he

espied a lady and a gentleman tied to some trees, and a little further a carriage, with two richly-harnessed mules. He at once concluded that the men on the ground were banditti; and their talk which he overheard showed him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four brigands were all equally minded to take possession of the lady who had fallen into their hands, and they were speaking of casting lots for her. Lamela, having thus learned the whole business, came back to us, and gave us a faithful report of all he had seen and heard.

“Gentlemen,” Don Alphonso now said, “this lady and this gentleman, whom the robbers have tied to the trees, are probably persons of high rank. Shall we suffer them to fall victims to the cruelty and the brutality of these brigands? Let me persuade you to set upon these villains, and they will fall by our hands.” “With all my heart,” said Don Raphael. “I am as ready to do a good action as a bad one.” Ambrose too protested that he wished for nothing better than to lend a hand in such a praiseworthy enterprise; for which he foresaw, said he, that we should be well rewarded. I also will make bold to say that the danger did not terrify me on the present occasion, and that no knight-errant ever showed himself more eager in the service of the fair sex. But to tell the truth without concealment, the danger was not great; for, Lamela having brought us

word that the arms of the robbers were all piled up ten or twelve paces out of their reach, there was no difficulty for us to carry out our design. We tied our horse to a tree, and as softly as possible approached the spot where the brigands were. They were talking with great warmth, and making a noise which assisted us in taking them unawares. We secured their arms before they had any suspicion that we were so near; and then firing on them at close quarters, stretched them all on the ground.

Whilst this conflict was going on the candle went out, and we were left in darkness. However, we were not remiss in untying the lady and gentleman, whom fear had so overcome that they had not sufficient strength left to thank us for what we had done. It is true they did not yet know whether to regard us as their deliverers, or as fresh brigands, who had taken them from the others, without any intention of using them better. But we reassured them by declaring that we would conduct them to an inn which Ambrose asserted was not more than half a league off; and that there they might take all necessary measures for proceeding on their journey in safety. After this assurance, by which they seemed much gratified, we put them into their carriage, and led them out of the wood, holding the mules by the bridle. Our anchorites examined also the pockets of the vanquished; and then we went back for

Don Alphonso's horse. We also took the steeds of the robbers, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle. Next, taking all the horses with us, we followed Brother Anthony, mounted on one of the mules, to drive the carriage to the inn, which we did not reach, however, in less than two hours, though he had assured us it was not very far from the wood.

We knocked loudly at the door. Everyone in the house was already in bed. The landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were by no means sorry to have their rest disturbed by the arrival of an equipage which looked as though it should have done much more good to the house than it did. The whole inn was lighted up in a moment. Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda lent their assistance to the gentleman and the lady in alighting from the carriage; they even attended them as far as the room to which they were conducted by the landlord. There, sundry compliments were exchanged, and we were not a little astonished to learn that it was the Count of Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina whom we had just rescued. It would be impossible to express the surprise of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recognised each other. The Count did not remark it, being too much occupied with other matters. He told us how the robbers had attacked him,

and how they had seized his daughter and himself, after killing his postillion, a page, and a valet. He ended by expressing how deeply he felt the obligation under which we had laid him, and said that, if we would call upon him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should judge for ourselves whether or not he was ungrateful.

His lordship's daughter was not backward in acknowledgments for her timely rescue, and as Raphael and I considered that we should please Don Alphonso by giving him an opportunity of speaking to the young widow for a moment in private, we contrived to occupy the attention of the Count of Polan. "Lovely Seraphina," said Alphonso to the lady in a low voice, "I no longer complain of a fate which obliges me to live as a man banished from civilized society, since I have been so fortunate to contribute to the important service which has been rendered you." "Is it indeed you," she answered, sighing, "who have saved my life and honour? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah! Don Alphonso, why did you kill my brother?" She said no more to him; but he sufficiently understood by these words, and by the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was over head and ears in love with Seraphina, she loved him hardly less.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT GIL BLAS AND HIS COMPANIONS DID AFTER LEAVING THE COUNT OF POLAN; THE IMPORTANT PROJECT WHICH AMBROSE FORMED, AND HOW IT WAS CARRIED OUT.

THE Count of Polan, after spending half the night in thanking us and assuring us that we might rely on his gratitude, sent for the landlord to consult him on the best means of getting safely to Turis, whither he wished to go. We left this nobleman to take his measures for that purpose, quitted the inn, and followed the road which Lamela thought proper to select.

After two hours' travelling, daylight overtook us near Campillo. We quickly made for the mountains between that hamlet and Requena. There we passed the day in resting ourselves, and making up our accounts, which the money of the brigands had greatly augmented; for more than three hundred pistoles, in coins of all kinds, had been found in their pockets. At nightfall we set out again, and on the following morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We got into the first wood which presented itself to our view, and, plunging into it, reached a place watered by a brook as clear as crystal, which flowed slowly along to join the streams

of the Guadalaviar.¹ The shade of the trees, and the abundant pasturage for our horses, would have induced us to halt here, even if we had not already resolved to do so. We therefore did not think of going further.

We dismounted, and made our preparations to spend the day very pleasantly; but when we thought of breakfasting we found that we had little left to eat. Bread was nearly failing us, and our wine-skin had become a body without a soul. "Gentlemen," said Ambrose, "the most charming retreats scarcely delight us without Bacchus and Ceres. I propose we renew our provisions to-day; and for this purpose I will go to Xelva, rather a fine town, barely two leagues from here. I shall soon have performed this journey." After having said these words, he slung the wine-skin and his wallet across one of the horses, mounted, and was out of the wood with a despatch which promised a quick return.

We had every reason to hope for this, and expected Lamela each minute; but he did not come back quite so soon. More than half the day was gone; nay, night herself was already spreading her black wings over the trees, when we once more beheld our caterer, whose delay was beginning to cause us some anxiety. He

¹ The Guadalaviar, a river of Spain, rises on the confines of Arragon and New Castile, and after a south-east course through Valencia, falls into the sea below the city of that name.

surpassed our expectations by the quantity of things with which he was laden. Not only did he bring the skin full of excellent wine, and the wallet crammed with bread and ready dressed game of every kind, but there was also on his horse a large bundle of clothes which we eyed very attentively. He perceived this and said, with a smile, "Gentlemen, you seem surprised to see these articles, and I can excuse it. You do not know why I bought these at Xelva. I defy Don Raphael or anybody else on this earth to guess the reason." With these words he undid the bundle, to show us in detail what we were observing in the aggregate. He displayed a cloak and a very long black cassock, two doublets, and breeches; one of those ink-horns which are composed of two pieces attached to each other by a string, the bottom being separate from the case to contain the pens;¹ a quire of fine white paper; a padlock with a large seal, and some green sealing-wax. When he had shown us all these purchases Don Raphael said to him in a bantering tone, "Egad! Master Ambrose, it must be confessed that you have made a fine bargain. Pray, what use do you mean to put these things to?" "To an excellent use," replied Lamela. "The whole lot only cost me ten doubloons,² and I am convinced they shall

¹ See vol. I., INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, page xviii.

² A doubloon is a double pistole, of the value of about three pounds five shillings.

bring us in more than five hundred ; you may depend upon that. I am not the sort of man to burden myself with a useless pedlar's pack ; and to prove you that I have not been making a fool's purchase, I will tell you a plan that I have formed, a plan which is without contradiction one of the most ingenious ever conceived. You shall judge of it ; and I am sure that when I have communicated it to you, you will be delighted. Listen.

“After having laid in my provison of bread,” he continued, “I went to a cook shop where I ordered six partridges, and the same number of chickens and young rabbits to be put to the fire. Whilst these were roasting there came in a man in great wrath, who, complaining aloud of the conduct of a tradesman in the town, said to the cook, ‘By Saint Iago,¹ Samuel Simon is the most wrong-headed tradesman in Xelva. He has insulted me in his own shop before his customers. The skinflint would not give me credit for six yards of cloth, and yet he knows I am a substantial working-man, and that no one ever lost anything by me. What do you think of such an animal? He is glad to give credit to people of quality, and would rather chance it with them than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. What a strange whim ! But he is a cursed Jew ; and I

¹ Saint Iago is the patron saint of Spain, and his body is said to be at Compostella.

hope he will be taken in by them! I shall have my wish some day; there are plenty of tradesmen who would back me in that.'

"As I listened to this speech from our working-man, who had a good deal more to say, the idea came into my head of avenging him by tricking Samuel Simon. 'My friend,' I said to the man who was complaining of that tradesman, 'what kind of a fellow is the person you speak of?' 'A very bad one,' he answered, bluntly. 'I tell you he is an arrant usurer, though he pretends to be an honourable man. He was a Jew, and has turned Catholic, but at bottom he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate¹ was, for they say he became converted because he thought it would pay.'

"I listened attentively to all the artisan said, and when I left the cook-shop, did not fail to enquire where Samuel Simon lived. Some man showed me the way to his shop, and there was no difficulty in finding out the house. I took a good look at it, taking stock of everything; and my imagination, always on the alert, planned a scheme of roguery over which I have been pondering, and which seems to me not unworthy of Señor Gil Blas' servant. I went to a second-hand clothes shop, where I bought these garments; one for acting the part of an

¹ The grumbling working-man believes Pontius Pilate to have been a Jew, because he had been Governor of Judea when Christ was crucified.

inquisitor, another for representing his secretary, and the third for playing the character of an alguazil. This, gentlemen, is what I have done, and this has somewhat delayed my return."

"Ah, my dear Ambrose," interrupted Don Raphael at this point, in a transport of joy, "what a wonderful idea! what a capital scheme! I am quite jealous of your invention. Willingly would I exchange the best strokes of my career for such a happy flight of intellect. Yes, Lamela, my friend," continued he, "I see all the promise of your design; its execution need not trouble you. You want two good actors to second you, and they are ready at hand. You have yourself a sanctified countenance, and will do capitally as an inquisitor; I will represent the secretary; and Señor Gil Blas, if he pleases, shall play the part of an alguazil. Thus," he added, "are the characters distributed. To-morrow we will act the piece, and I will answer for its success, unless we meet with one of those accidents which may upset the best-arranged plans."

I had as yet but a very confused notion of the scheme which Don Raphael liked so much, but during supper they completely enlightened me, and the project seemed an ingenious one. After discussing part of our game, and bleeding the wine-skin very copiously, we laid down on the turf, and were soon fast asleep.

But our slumber was not of long duration, for the pitiless Ambrose interrupted it an hour after. "Rise, rise," he cried, before the day had begun to dawn; "people who have a great undertaking to carry out must not be idle." "The deuce take you, Master Inquisitor," said Don Raphael, starting up, "how active you are! That is a bad omen for Mr Samuel Simon." "You are right there," replied Lamela, laughing; "and what is more, I dreamed just now that I was plucking the hairs out of his beard. Is not that an awkward dream for him, Master Secretary?" These jokes were followed by a thousand others, which put us all in a good humour. We were merry over our breakfast, and then we prepared to act our several parts. Ambrose dressed himself in the long gown and cloak, which gave him all the appearance of a commissary of the Holy Office;¹ Don Raphael and I also dressed, and we were not bad imitations of a secretary and an alguazil. We took a good deal of time in thus disguising ourselves, and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon when we sallied from the wood to visit Xelva. It is true that there was no

¹ The Holy Office was the ordinary name given to the Inquisition. The author of the *Journal du Voyage d'Espagne* says, "Don Diego de Cabrera Sotomayor told me that the greater part of the noblemen of Cordova became familiars of the Inquisition, of which there are more than 22,000 in Spain." An old Spanish proverb said, "*A la Inquisicion chiton*," "Say nothing but good of the Inquisition."

hurry, as our performance was not to begin until nightfall. So we walked slowly, and even halted at the city gates to await the close of day.

As soon as it was dark we left our horses there, to the care of Don Alphonso, who was glad to have no other part to play. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I went in the first place, not to Samuel Simon's house, but to a tavern quite near it. The inquisitor walked in front; and on entering the inn, said to the landlord with great gravity. "Master, I want to speak a word with you in private. I have to talk to you about a matter which concerns the Inquisition, and which is, therefore, of the greatest importance." The publican showed us into a parlour, where Lamela, seeing that there was no one but ourselves, said, "I am a commissary of the Holy Office." At these words the landlord turned pale, and replied in a trembling voice that he did not think he had given the Holy Inquisition any cause of complaint. Ambrose replied, gently, "Nor does it contemplate giving you any trouble. Heaven forbid that, in its zeal to punish, it should confound innocence with crime! It is severe, but always just; in a word, before any one experiences its chastisements, one must first have deserved them. Therefore, it is not you who have brought me to Xelva, but a certain tradesman by name Samuel Simon. We have

received a very bad account of him and his behaviour. They say he is still a Jew, and that he has only embraced Christianity from mere worldly motives.¹ I order you in the name of the Holy Office, to tell me what you know of this man. Take care that, being his neighbour, and probably his friend, you do not try to screen him; for I warn you that if I detect in your evidence the slightest reserve on his behalf, you are lost yourself. Now, secretary," he continued, turning to Raphael, "do your duty."

The secretary, who already had his paper and inkstand in his hand, took his seat at a table, and prepared, with the most serious manner possible, to take down the landlord's deposition, who declared on his part that he would not conceal the truth. "If that be so," said the inquisitorial commissary, "there is nothing to prevent our beginning. Just answer

¹ When the Spanish Jews did not become Christians they seem to have led a miserable life. According to Marsollier's *Histoire de l'Inquisition et son origine*, Cologne, 1693, these Jews became liable to be brought before the Inquisition for crimes against the Christian religion, such as heresy, blasphemy, magic; if they opposed the orders of that tribunal; or if they published, wrote, or stated anything contrary to the articles of faith which are common to Christians and Jews; or if they prevented any one of their own creed from becoming a Christian, or proselytised; or if they sold the Talmud or other books forbidden by the Inquisition, attacking the Christian religion; or if they had Christian nurses in their house; or did anything whatever to bring that religion into contempt. These laws were the same for Turks and other infidels.

my questions ; I ask no more. Do you know if Samuel Simon goes regularly to church ?” “ I have not taken notice of that,” said the innkeeper ; “ I do not remember I ever saw him at church.” “ Very good,” cried the inquisitor, “ write down that he is never seen at church.” “ I do not say so, sir,” replied the landlord ; “ I only say that I have not seen him there. We may have been in the same church without my seeing him.” “ My friend,” replied Lamela, “ you forget that you are not to screen Samuel Simon when I interrogate ; I have warned you of the consequences of that. You are only to state what goes against him, and not say a word in his favour.” “ In that case, master licentiate,” replied the landlord, “ my deposition will scarcely be worth the trouble of taking. I know nothing about the tradesman you are inquiring after, and can say neither good nor ill of him ; but if you desire to examine into his private life, I will fetch his servant Gaspard, whom you may question. The lad sometimes comes here to take a glass with his friends. I can assure you he has a good tongue, will chatter as much as you please, will tell you all the actions of his master’s life, and will give your secretary plenty of work, take my word for it.”

“ I like your frankness,” thereupon said Ambrose ; “ you show your zeal for the Holy Office by pointing out to me a man acquainted with

the habits and customs of Simon ; I shall report this to the Inquisition. Hasten, then," he continued; "go and fetch this Gaspard of whom you speak : but set about it discreetly, so that his master may have no suspicion of what is going on." The inn-keeper acquitted himself of his errand with much secrecy and despatch, and brought the tradesman's servant along with him. The young fellow was most talkative, and precisely such a one as we wanted. "Welcome, my lad," said Lamela. "In me you behold an inquisitor appointed by the Holy Office to collect informations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You are an inmate of his house, and therefore must be a witness to most of his actions. I think I need not warn you that you are bound to declare all you know of him, when I order you to do so in the name of the Holy Inquisition." "Mister Licentiate," replied the tradesman's servant, "you could not have come to a man better disposed to tell you what you wish to know. I am quite ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded to do it in the name of the Holy Office. If my master had my character for his text I am sure he would not spare me, so I shall be no more squeamish about him. I will tell you, to start with, that he is a sly man, at whose private opinions it is impossible to get, a man who affects all the appearances of being pious, and who is in

reality far from virtuous. He goes every night to visit a little wench. . .” “I am glad to know that,” interrupted Ambrose, “and I can plainly perceive from what you tell me, that he is a man of bad morals; but give a careful answer to the questions I will put to you. It is especially concerning his religion that I am commissioned to discover his sentiments. Tell me, do you ever eat pork at your house?” “I do not think,” replied Gaspard, “that we have seen it on the table twice during the year I have been there.” “Very well,” replied the inquisitor; “write down, secretary, that pork is never eaten in Samuel Simon’s house. On the other hand,” he continued, “no doubt they serve lamb sometimes?” “Yes, every now and then,” replied the lad; “for instance, we had a lamb last Easter.” “What a lucky date,” exclaimed the commissioner; “secretary, write down that Simon keeps the Passover.¹ This is going on exceedingly well, and it strikes me that we have received some valuable information. Tell me also, friend,” continued Lamela, “if you have ever seen your master fondle little children?” “A thousand times,” answered Gaspard. “When he sees little boys pass our shop, if they are at all pretty, he stops them and makes much of them.” “Write,

¹ In the original, *Simon fait la Pâque*, because *Pâque*, the Passover, is feminine, as well as in the sense of the Lord’s supper, but is masculine, and written *Pâques*, when meaning Easter.

secretary," interrupted the inquisitor, "that Samuel Simon is grievously suspected of enticing Christian children into his house, to cut their throats.¹ A fine proselyte indeed! Oh, oh, Master Simon, upon my word you will have an account to settle with the Holy Office! Do not imagine that it will permit you to carry on your barbarous sacrifices with impunity! Take heart, zealous Gaspard," said he to the servant, "confess everything you know; make it quite clear that this pretended Catholic is more than ever attached to Jewish customs and ceremonies. Is it not a fact that during one day in the week he remains wholly idle?" "No," replied Gaspard, "I have not observed that. I only know that on certain days he shuts himself up in his room, and stays there a long time." "Why, that is the very thing!" exclaimed the commissioner; "he keeps the Sabbath, or I am not an inquisitor. Put it down, secretary; put down that he religiously observes the fast of the Sabbath. What an abominable man! I have only one more question to ask. Is he not also speaking about Jerusalem?" "Pretty often," replied the youth. "He tells us the history of the Jews, and how the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed." "Exactly so," resumed Ambrose. "Do not omit that point, secretary; write in

¹ Such an accusation was formerly brought against the Jews, and, unfortunately for them, too often believed.

large letters that Samuel Simon ardently desires the rebuilding of the temple, and that he is plotting day and night for the re-establishment of the Jewish nation. That is all I want to know, and it is unnecessary to ask any further questions. What Gaspard has testified in the spirit of truth would suffice to bring all Jewry to the stake."

After the worthy commissary of the Holy Office had thus interrogated the tradesman's servant, he told him that he might retire; but he bade him in the name of the Holy Inquisition not to mention to his master about what had taken place. Gaspard promised obedience, and went away. We were not long in following him. We left the inn as gravely as we had entered it, and went and knocked at Simon's door. He himself came to open it; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as ourselves, he was still more so when Lamela, our spokesman, said to him in a tone of authority: "Master Samuel, I command you, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, whose commissary I have the honour to be, to give me forthwith the key of your private room. I wish to see if I can there discover anything to justify the reports which have been sent in to us against you."

The tradesman, disconcerted by this speech, reeled two steps backward as though he had received a blow in the stomach. But, far from suspecting a trick on our part, he implicitly

imagined that some secret enemy had tried to make him an object of suspicion to the Holy Office ; possibly also, feeling that he was not too good a Catholic, he had his reasons to fear an information. However this may have been, I never saw a man more dismayed. He obeyed unresistingly, and, with the respect natural to a man who dreads the Inquisition, opened his private room for us. " At least," Ambrose said, as he entered, " at least you receive the orders of the Holy Office without contumacy. But," he added, " withdraw to another room, and leave me at liberty to discharge my duty." Samuel resisted this order no more than the former one. He remained in his shop, and the three of us entered his room, where, without loss of time, we began to search for the cash. It was not difficult to find it, for it was in an open chest, and there was a good deal more than we could carry away. It consisted of a large number of bags piled one above another, but all filled with silver. We should have preferred gold. However, as we could not change facts, we had to accommodate ourselves to necessity. We filled our pockets with ducats, put some into our breeches, and in every other part where we thought we could conceal them. In short, we were heavily laden without seeming to be so ; thanks to the skill of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who thus proved to me that there is nothing like knowing one's trade.

We left the room where we had made such a splendid bag ; and then, for a reason which the reader will very easily guess, the worshipful inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hands. Then applying his seal to it, he said to Simon—" Master Samuel, I forbid you, in the name of the Holy Inquisition, to touch this padlock or this seal, which you are bound to respect as the seal of the Holy Office. I shall return thither to-morrow at the same hour to remove it, and to give you further orders." Hereupon he ordered the street door to be opened, and we went out joyfully, one by one. As soon as we had gone about fifty yards we set off at such speed and so nimbly, that we scarcely touched the ground, in spite of the weight we carried. We were soon out of the town, and mounting our horses once more, urged them forward towards Segorba, returning thanks to the god Mercury for so fortunate an occurrence.

CHAPTER II.

THE DETERMINATION TAKEN BY DON ALPHONSO AND
GIL BLAS AFTER THIS ADVENTURE.

WE travelled all night, according to our praiseworthy custom, and at dawn found ourselves

near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all tired, we readily left the high-road, and made for a clump of willows which we perceived at the bottom of a hillock about ten or twelve hundred yards from the village, where we did not think it advisable to stop. We found that these willows afforded us a pleasant shady retreat, by the side of a rivulet which was watering their roots; and as the spot pleased us, we resolved to spend the day there. We dismounted, unsaddled our horses to let them graze, and laid down on the grass. There we rested for a while, and then emptied our wallet and our wine-skin. After a good breakfast we amused ourselves by counting all the money we had taken from Samuel Simon, which amounted to three thousand ducats; so that with such a sum, and what we had before, we could boast of being by no means badly supplied.

As it was necessary to lay in more provision, Ambrose and Don Raphael, after doffing their dresses of inquisitor and secretary, said that they both would go and buy them; that the Xelva adventure had only whetted their appetite, and that they had a mind to repair to Segorba to see if some opportunity for a new stroke of business might not turn up. "Only wait for us under these willows," said Lucinda's son; "we shall not be long before we return." "That won't do, Don Raphael," I exclaimed

with a laugh, "you had better tell us to wait till Doomsday.¹ If you leave us we are not likely to see you again in a hurry." "This suspicion is an insult to us," replied Señor Ambrose; "but we deserve this affront. It is but reasonable for you to mistrust us, after the affair at Valladolid, and to fancy that we should not have more scruples in leaving you than we did in abandoning our comrades whom we left in the lurch in that town. But you are mistaken. The persons from whose company we withdrew were very bad characters, and their society began to be intolerable to us. I must do this justice to the members of our profession, and admit that there are no partners in civilised life whom interest divides less; but if we have no feelings in common, our good understanding may be interrupted, as among all other men. Therefore, Señor Gil Blas," pursued Lamela, "I beseech you, and the worthy Don Alphonso, to place a little more confidence in us, and to set your minds at rest, because Don Raphael and I feel inclined to go to Segorba."

"It is a very easy matter," Lucinda's son observed, "to deprive these gentlemen of every cause for anxiety; we have only to leave the cash in their hands, and they will possess a

¹ The original has "*dites-nous plutôt de vous attendre sous l'orme*," "tell us rather to wait under the elm-tree," because an old song of which the burden was, "*Attendez-moi sous l'orme, Vous m'attendrez long temps*," was hummed when a man promised to meet a friend, and did not intend to keep his promise.

good security for our return. You see, Señor Gil Blas, that we come to the point at once. You will have pledges of our coming back, and I can assure you that Ambrose and myself will leave you without the slightest misgiving of your absconding with so valuable a deposit. After such a complete evidence of our good faith, will you not trust us thoroughly?" "Yes, gentlemen," I said, "and now you can do as you please." They went off at once, with the wine-skin and the wallet, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso. After they had gone the latter said to me, "Señor Gil Blas, I must open my heart to you. I reproach myself for having had the complaisance of remaining with these two rogues. You have no idea how often I have already repented of it. Last night, whilst I was taking care of the horses, a thousand mortifying reflections rushed on my mind. I thought that it ill became a young man who has any principles of honour, to be associated with such vicious characters as Raphael and Lamela; and that if unfortunately, some day or other—and this may well happen—the miscarriage of some piece of rascality should bring us into the hands of the law, I should have the disgrace of being condemned with them as a thief, and of undergoing an infamous punishment. Such ideas are continually rising up in my mind, and I will confess to you that I have resolved, in

order not to be any longer an accomplice in the wicked actions which they may perpetrate, to separate from them for ever. I do not believe," he continued, "that you will disapprove of my intention." "No, I assure you I do not," I replied; "though you saw me perform the part of alguazil in the comedy of Samuel Simon, do not imagine that pieces of this sort are to my taste. I call Heaven to witness that, whilst playing this pretty part, I said to myself, 'Upon my word, Master Gil Blas, if justice should lay hold of you by the collar at this very moment, you would richly deserve the remuneration due to you.' Therefore I am no more disposed than yourself, worthy Don Alphonso, to remain in such bad company; and, if you like, I will leave with you. When these gentlemen return we will ask them to divide the money, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, we will take leave of them."

The lover of the beautiful Seraphina approved of my suggestion. "Let us make for Valencia," he said, "and then we will embark for Italy, where we can enter the service of the Republic of Venice. Is it not better to adopt the profession of arms than to lead the base and culpable life which we are leading? We shall even be in a condition to cut a pretty good figure with the money we shall have. Not," he added, "that I can use wealth so ill acquired without remorse; but necessity compels me;

and, moreover, if ever I make the slightest fortune in war, I make a vow to indemnify Samuel Simon." I gave Don Alphonso to understand that I was of the same mind, and we finally resolved to quit our companions the following morning before daybreak. We were not tempted to profit by their absence, that is, by decamping at once with the cash; for the confidence they had shown by leaving us in charge of the money did not permit of our even entertaining the thought, although the trick they had played me at the lodging-house would have made this theft excusable in a way."

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba at the close of day. The first thing they told us was that their journey had been very successful, for they had laid the foundations of a rascally trick which, to all appearance, would be still more serviceable to us than that of the evening before. Thereupon Lucinda's son was about to communicate to us all the particulars; but Don Alphonso then spoke, and politely told him that, not feeling any inclination to live as they were doing, he intended to leave them. I also announced that I had the same intention. They did all they could to induce us to accompany them in their expeditions, but in vain; we took leave of them on the next morning, after having made an equal division of our money, and set out for Valencia.

CHAPTER III.

HOW AFTER AN UNPLEASANT ACCIDENT, DON ALPHONSO FOUND HIS HIGHEST WISHES FULFILLED, AND HOW GIL BLAS FOUND HIMSELF SUDDENLY IN A SUPERIOR SITUATION.

WE pushed on cheerfully as far as Bunol, where we were unfortunately obliged to stop, as Don Alphonso fell ill. He was attacked by a violent fever, with such alarming symptoms as made me fear for his life. Luckily there were no doctors in the place, and nothing worse came of it than the fright this illness gave me. He was out of danger in three days, and my nursing aided his recovery. He showed himself very grateful for all I had done for him, and, as we really liked each other, we swore an eternal friendship.

We resumed our journey, still resolved, as soon as we reached Valencia, to take the first opportunity which might offer itself of getting to Italy. But Heaven, which had a happy destiny in store for us, willed it otherwise. At the gates of a handsome castle we saw several peasants of both sexes dancing in a ring, and making merry. We approached to look on at their revels; but what was Don Alphonso's surprise on suddenly perceiving Baron Steinbach, who, having recognised him, ran to him

with open arms, and exclaimed in a transport of joy, "Ah, Don Alphonso, is it you? What a happy meeting! Whilst you are being sought for everywhere, chance presents you to my eyes."

My fellow-traveller instantly alighted, and ran to embrace the baron, whose joy seemed to me excessive. "Come, my son," said this good old man, "you shall now learn who you are, and enjoy the happiest fate." As he uttered these words, he led him into the castle. I went in with them; for I also had dismounted, and tied the horses to a tree. The lord of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man of about fifty, and very handsome. "Señor," Baron Steinbach said to him, as he introduced Don Alphonso, "behold your son." At these words Don Cæsar de Leyva, for so the master of the castle was named, threw his arms round Don Alphonso's neck, and weeping for joy, said to him, "My dear son, you see in me the author of your existence. If I have left you so long in ignorance of your rank believe me that I was doing great violence to myself, and have lamented it a thousand times; but I could not act otherwise. I married your mother for love, for her birth was much inferior to my own. I was then under the control of a stern father, which compelled me to conceal a marriage contracted without his consent. Baron Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and he and

I arranged you should be brought up by him. But now my father is no more, and I can acknowledge you as my only heir. This is not all," he added; "I am going to bestow your hand on a young lady whose birth is equal to my own." "Señor," interrupted Don Alphonso, "do not make me pay too dearly for the happiness you have just revealed to me. May I not know that I have the honour of being your son, without at the same time learning that you wish to make me unhappy? Ah, sir, do not be more cruel than your own father. If he could not approve of your attachment, at least he did not compel you to marry someone else." "My son," Don Cæsar replied, "I do not intend to tyrannise over your affections; but humour me by seeing the lady whom I destine for you; that is all I ask of you. Though she is charming, and a very good match, I promise I will not compel you to marry her. She is now in this castle. Follow me, and you will admit that there could not be a more lovely creature." So saying, he led Don Alphonso into a room, where I went in with them, together with Baron Steinbach.

The Count of Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Fernand de Leyva, his son-in-law, who was Don Cæsar's nephew, were in this room, as well as several other ladies and gentlemen. Don Fernand, as I have already mentioned before, had eloped

with Julia, and it was on the occasion of the marriage of these two lovers that the peasantry of the neighbourhood had that day assembled to make merry. As soon as Don Alphonso made his appearance, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count of Polan rose and embraced him, saying, "Welcome my deliverer! Don Alphonso," he pursued, "recognise the power of virtue over generous souls! Though you slew my son, you saved my life. I therefore sacrifice my resentment, and give you this very Seraphina whose honour you saved. Thus I acquit myself towards you." Don Cæsar's son did not fail to assure the Count of Polan how much he was affected by his kindness; and I do not know whether he took greater delight in discovering his origin, or in learning that he was to become the husband of Seraphina. This marriage actually took place a few days afterwards, to the great satisfaction of the parties chiefly concerned in it.

As I also was one of the Count's deliverers, this nobleman, who recognised me, told me that he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune. I thanked him for his generosity, and declined to leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his household, and honoured me with his confidence. He was hardly married when, the trick played on Samuel Simon weighing on his conscience, he

made me take to that tradesman the whole of the money which had been stolen. I therefore went to make restitution, which was beginning the business of a steward at the wrong end.

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

THE LOVES OF GIL BLAS AND DAME LORENZA
SEPHORA.

I ACCORDINGLY went to Xelva to take the worthy Samuel Simon the three thousand ducats which we had robbed him of. I will frankly confess that I was tempted on the way to appropriate this money, so as to begin my stewardship under happy auspices. I could have done this with impunity, for I had only to travel about for five or six days, and then return as though I had fulfilled my commission. Don Alphonso and his father believed in me too strongly to suspect me of a breach of trust. Everything was in my favour. However, I did not yield to the temptation, and may even say that I overcame it like an honourable lad; which was not a little to the credit of a youth who had kept company with great rascals. Many persons who have associated with none but honest men are less scrupulous: those especially with whom money is intrusted on deposit, which they can keep without damaging their reputation, might tell us something about this.

After having made restitution to the shop-keeper, who had not in any way expected it,

I returned to the castle of Leyva.¹ The Count of Polan was no longer there, and had set out for Toledo with Julia and Don Fernand. I found my new master more smitten with his Seraphina than ever; his Seraphina wrapped up in him; and Don Cæsar delighted to have them both with him. I made it my business to gain the friendship of this affectionate father, and in this I succeeded. The whole household was placed under my superintendence. I directed everything; received the rent from the tenants; controlled the expenditure, and had absolute power over the servants, but unlike the generality of men in my position, I did not abuse it; I did not discharge the servants who displeased me, and did not require them to be very submissive to me. If they went direct to Don Cæsar or his son to ask for favours, far from opposing them, I spoke on their behalf. Moreover, the marks of affection which both my masters were continually giving me, inspired me with an honest zeal to serve them. Their interest was my sole object; there were no underhand tricks going on in my administration: I was such a steward as is not to be found every day.

Whilst I was congratulating myself on the

¹ Llorente supposes that this castle was at Chiva, and that the lords of Leyva ought to have been called lords of Chiva. It seems very hard for a novelist to be not able even to give fancy names to some of his creations without being accused of ignorance in geography.

happiness of my lot, love, as though jealous of what fortune was doing for me, was also bent on having a share in my gratitude. He was the cause that in the heart of Mistress Lorenza Sephora, the principal attendant of Seraphina, a violent inclination sprung up for the worthy steward. My conquest, if truth must be spoken, was verging on her fiftieth year; but she had a wholesome appearance, a pleasant face, and two fine eyes, which she knew how to use to the best advantage, so that she was still passable enough to make love to. I could wish her to have had a little more colour in her face, for she was very pale; a fact which I set down to the strictness of her celibacy.

The lady assailed me for a long time with looks wherein her passion was depicted; but instead of responding to her glances I feigned not to perceive them. By these means, she seemed to think me a novice in gallantry, which did not displease her. Fancying, therefore, that she ought not to stop at the language of the eyes with a youth no more enlightened than she thought me to be, in the first conversation which we had together she declared her sentiments in unequivocal terms, that I might not plead ignorance of them. She set about it like one who had been well trained, pretended to be embarrassed as she spoke to me; and after freely telling me all that she had to say, put

her hand before her face, to make me think that she was ashamed to let me see her weakness. There was no standing such an attack; and though vanity moved me more than passion, I showed myself overcome by her signs of affection. I even pretended to be very pressing, and played the passionate lover so naturally that I was rebuked. Lorenza reproved me so gently that, whilst she recommended me to put some restraint on myself, she did not appear angry at my want of it. I might have pushed matters still further if the lovely creature had not been afraid of giving me a bad opinion of her virtue by according me a too easy victory. So we parted with a promise to meet again; Sephora persuaded that her mock resistance made her appear a vestal in my eyes, and I full of the sweet hope of presently bringing this adventure to an issue.

Affairs were in this happy condition when one of Don Caesar's servants told me a piece of news which moderated my joy. This lad was one of those busy-bodies who make it their business to discover all that is going on in a house. As he was very attentive in paying his court to me, and treated me to some fresh bit of news new every day, he came to tell me one morning that he had made an amusing discovery, which would be communicated to me on condition that I would keep the secret, because it concerned Dame

Lorenza Sephora, whose resentment, he said, he was afraid of incurring. I was too anxious to know what he had to say not to promise him to be discreet; but, without seeming to be at all interested, I asked him as calmly as I could what was the discovery he was about to amuse me with. "Lorenza," said he, "privately admits the village surgeon into her room every night; he is a strongly built young fellow, and my gentleman remains with her a pretty considerable time. I do not mean to say," he added in a satirical tone, "that all this may not be perfectly harmless; but you must admit that a young man slipping mysteriously into a lady's room gives some ground for thinking ill of her."

Although this information gave me as much pain as if I had really been in love, I took good care not to show it, and so far did violence to my feelings as to laugh at the news which pierced me to the very soul. But as soon as I was alone I made up for my constraint; I raved, I swore, I pondered as to the course I ought to take. At one time, holding Lorenza in utter contempt, I thought of throwing her over, without so much as stooping to an explanation; and at another time, fancying I was bound in honour to drive the surgeon away, I formed the design of challenging him to fight. This last resolution triumphed. About evening I concealed my-

self; and sure enough I saw my gentleman mysteriously slink into the duenna's room. Nothing more was needed to keep my rage alive, which might otherwise have cooled. I went outside the castle, took up my position on the road by which the gallant would have to return, and waited for him resolutely, whilst every moment stimulated my desire to fight. At last my enemy appeared. I advanced a few steps, like any Drawcansir; but all on a sudden—I do not know how the deuce it came about—I felt myself overcome, like a Homeric hero, by a feeling of fear which restrained me. I was as much disturbed as Paris, when he stood up to fight against Menelaus, and began to look at my man, who seemed lusty and vigorous, and who wore by his side an exceedingly long sword.¹ All this had its effect upon me; nevertheless, for the sake of my honour or from any other cause, although I perceived the danger with eyes which continually magnified it, and in spite of nature, which strove to turn me aside, I mustered up boldness enough to advance upon the surgeon and draw my rapier.

My action surprised him. “What is the

¹ It seems odd that a country surgeon should visit his patients with a sword by his side. In Spain formerly only noblemen were permitted to wear it, but as they made a bad use of their swords, every one was later on allowed to carry one. In the *Voyages faits en divers temps en Espagne . . . et ailleurs*, p. 112, it is said that “*les chirurgiens vont sans épées et en mules comme les médecins.*”

matter, Señor Gil Blas?" he asked. "What is the meaning of these knight-errantry demonstrations? You want to be merry, I presume?" "No, master barber," I replied; "not at all; nothing could be more serious. I like to know if you are as brave as you are gallant. Do not flatter yourself that I shall leave you in peaceful possession of the favours of the lady whom you have just secretly visited at the castle." "By Saint Come,¹" cried the surgeon, with a burst of laughter, "this is an amusing business. By Heaven, appearances are very deceitful." Imagining from these words that he had no more wish to fight than I had, I grew more insolent. "That won't do," said I; "do not fancy that I shall be satisfied with a mere denial." "I see," he replied, "that I shall be compelled to explain, in order to avert the misfortune which must befall either you or me. So I will reveal you a secret; although people of our profession cannot be too discreet. If Dame Lorenza admits me by stealth into her apartment, it is only to conceal from the servants that something is wrong with her, and that she has an incurable ulcer in the back, which I dress every evening. This is the cause of the visits which disturb your peace; for the future you may be quite easy on this subject. But," he continued, "if you are not

¹ St Come, a physician, martyr, and patron saint of medical practitioners, therefore properly invoked by a surgeon.

satisfied with this explanation, and are absolutely bent on our fighting it out, you have only to say so ; I am not the sort of man to refuse such an invitation." So saying he drew his long rapier, which made me shudder, and put himself on his guard with an air which boded me no good. "It is enough," I replied, sheathing my sword ; "I am not such a brute as to refuse to listen to reason. After what you have told me, you are no longer my enemy. Let us embrace." At this proposal, which gave him to understand that I was not so formidable as I seemed at first, he laughed, put up his blade, and extended his arms to me ; after which we separated the best friends in the world.

From that moment the idea of Sephora only disgusted me. I avoided all the opportunities she gave me for speaking to her in private, and this I did with such studious care that she noticed it. Astonished by so great a change, she wanted to know the reason ; and contriving at length to speak to me apart, she said, "Master Steward, pray tell me why you avoid the very sight of me ? Instead of seeking an opportunity to speak to me, as you used to do, you carefully keep away from me. It is true that I made advances to you, but you responded. Kindly recall that private interview which we had together ; then you were all fire, now you are all ice. What is the meaning of it ?" The question was difficult to answer for a

simple-minded man, and I was greatly embarrassed by it. I do not precisely recollect what reply I made the lady; I only remember that it annoyed her greatly. Sephora, though from her gentle and modest manner you would have taken her for a lamb, was a tigress when her anger got the better of her. "I thought," she said, darting at me a look full of malice and rage, "I was conferring a great honour on such an insignificant fellow as you, by revealing sentiments which the first noblemen in the land would be proud to excite. I am justly punished for having unworthily lowered myself to the level of a pitiful adventurer."

She did not stop there; it would have been letting me off too cheap. Her tongue, giving way to her fury, loaded me with a hundred invectives, each one stronger than the last. I know I ought to have received them calmly, and to have remembered that by scorning to profit by my triumph over the virtue which I had assailed, I was committing a crime which women do not forgive. But I was too irritable to bear reproaches at which a sensible man in my place would only have laughed, and I lost patience. "Madam," I said, "let us despise no one. If these noblemen whom you have just mentioned had but seen your back, I am sure they would have been satisfied without going any further." No sooner had I hurled this shaft than the enraged duenna gave me the

hardest box on the ear ever dealt by an insulted woman. I did not wait for a second, and avoided by instant flight the shower of blows which would have fallen on me.

I thanked Heaven for delivering me out of this bad business, and fancied that I had nothing more to fear, since the lady had avenged herself. It seemed to me that she must hold her tongue for her own credit's sake; and in fact, a fortnight passed without my hearing any more upon the subject. I was beginning to forget it myself, when I was told that Sephora was ill. I was humane enough to be afflicted at the news, really felt for the poor lady, and thought how unfortunate it was her being in love with me; and that, unable to overcome a passion so ill requited, she had succumbed to it. I pictured myself with sorrow as the cause of her illness, and if I could not love the duenna, at least I pitied her. How little I knew her! Her tenderness being converted into hatred, she had no thought but how she might injure me.

One morning when I was in the company of Don Alphonso, I observed that young gentleman look sad and pensive. I asked him respectfully what was amiss with him. "I am vexed," he said, "to find Seraphina weak, unjust, ungrateful. You wonder at these words," he added, seeing that I was surprised, "yet nothing is more true. I do not know what reason



you have given Dame Lorenza to hate you ; but I can assure you that you have become so odious to her that she declares her death to be certain if you do not leave the castle as soon as possible. You may be assured that Seraphina, who knows your value, at first withstood a hatred which she could not gratify without injustice and ingratitude. But, to be brief, she is a woman ; she tenderly loves Sephora, who brought her up, and looks upon her so much in the light of a mother that she would fancy she had her death to answer for if she were not weak enough to gratify her old nurse. As for me, however great my affection is for Seraphina, I shall never have the base complaisance to agree with her in this respect. All the duennas in Spain may perish before I consent to part with a young man whom I regard more as a brother than as a servant !”

When Don Alphonso had spoken, I said to him. “Señor, I was born to be the sport of fortune. I had fancied she would cease to persecute me under your roof, where everything promised me a happy and peaceful life. But I must make up my mind to tear myself away from it, whatever happiness I may have enjoyed there.” “No, no,” exclaimed the generous son of Don Cæsar, “let me argue with Seraphina. It shall never be said that you were sacrificed to the whims of a duenna, to whom, indeed,

too much deference is paid already." "Sir," I replied, "you will only provoke Seraphina more by opposing her wishes. I had much rather withdraw than run the risk, by staying here any longer, of causing a disagreement between such a united couple. That would be a misfortune for which I should never console myself."

Don Alphonso forbade me to carry out my intention ; and I found him so determined in his resolution to support me that Lorenza would undoubtedly have had the worst of it, had I chosen to hold my ground, which I should have done if I had only consulted my resentment. There were moments when, irritated against the duenna, I was tempted to expose her ; but when I considered that if I were to reveal her shame I should only be stabbing a poor creature of whose misfortune I was the sole cause, and whom two incurable diseases were plainly hurrying to her grave, I felt nothing but pity for her. I came to the conclusion that, as I was so dangerous a person, it was my bounden duty to restore peace to the castle by quitting it. This I did before daybreak the next morning, without bidding my two employers farewell, lest they should oppose my departure from their partiality towards me. I only left in my room a document containing an exact account of receipts and disbursements during my stewardship.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT BECAME OF GIL BLAS AFTER HE LEFT THE
CASTLE OF LEYVA ; THE HAPPY CONSEQUENCES
OF HIS BEING UNSUCCESSFUL IN HIS AMOURS.

I WAS mounted on a good horse which belonged to me, and in my portmanteau I had two hundred pistoles, the greater part of which came from the robbers whom we had killed, and also from my share of the three thousand ducats filched from Samuel Simon ; for Don Alphonso had made restitution of the entire sum out of his own funds, without making me return what I had received. Regarding my wealth, therefore, as a possession rendered legitimate by this restitution, I enjoyed it without scruple. Thus I was sufficiently well off to be without anxiety for the future ; to say nothing of the confidence in one's own merits inseparable from my age. Moreover, Toledo promised to be a retreat exactly to my mind. There would not be a doubt that the Count of Polan would be pleased to welcome one of his deliverers, and insist upon him having an apartment in his house. But I looked upon this nobleman as a last resource ; and I resolved, before applying to him, to spend part of my money in travelling through the kingdoms of Murcia and Grenada, which I particularly longed to see. With this

intention I took the road to Almanza, whence, pursuing my journey, I went from town to town as far as Grenada, without any misadventure. It seemed as though fortune, satisfied at having played me so many tricks, meant at last to leave me in peace. But the traitress had plenty more trials in store for me, as the sequel will show.

One of the first persons I met in the streets of Grenada was the worthy Don Ferdinand de Leyva, a son-in-law of the Count of Polan, as well as Don Alphonso. We were both surprised at meeting each other. "Why, Gil Blas!" he cried, "you in this town! What brings you here?" "Señor," I replied, "if you are astonished to see me in this country, you will be still more so when you shall know why I have left the service of Don Cæsar and his son." I then related to him all that had passed between Sephora and myself, without concealing anything. He laughed heartily; and then, recovering his gravity, said, "My friend, let me offer myself as a mediator in this business. I will write to my sister-in-law. . . ." "No, no, Señor," I interrupted, "I beg you not to write to her. I did not leave the castle of Leyva in order to return to it. You may, if you will, show your kindness to me in another manner. If any one of your friends requires a secretary or a steward, I beg you to speak a good word in my favour. I venture to assure you that he

will not reproach you with having recommended him a bad servant." "With pleasure," he replied; "I will do whatever you wish. My business at Grenada is to visit an old aunt who is ill. I shall be here three weeks longer, after which I intend to return to my castle of Lorqui, where I have left my wife. I am staying here," he added, pointing to a house about a hundred yards from us. "Call upon me in a few days; I may, perhaps, have found some eligible appointment for you."

And indeed the very next time we met he said to me, "The Archbishop of Grenada, my relative and friend, is in want of some gentleman, of literary tastes, and who writes a good hand, to make fair copies of his manuscript, for he writes a great deal. He has composed a large number of homilies, and he goes on composing them every day, and preaching them amidst great applause. As I thought you would suit him, I have mentioned your name, and he has promised me to give you the place. Go and introduce yourself as coming from me; you will judge by his reception, whether I have spoken favourably of you."

The post seemed to be a desirable one; so, after having dressed myself in my best in order to appear before the prelate, I went one morning to the archbishop's palace. If I were to imitate the writers of romances, I should give a pompous description of the episcopal

palace of Grenada; expatiate on the structure of the edifice; extol the richness of the furniture; describe the statues and pictures which it contained, and should not spare my readers one of the stories which these represented; I shall, however, content myself by saying that the royal palace itself is scarcely its superior in magnificence.

In the apartments I found a crowd of ecclesiastics and gentlemen wearing swords, of whom the greater number were his Grace's officers, his chaplains, his gentlemen in waiting, his ushers and menials. The laymen were all superbly dressed; they might have been taken for noblemen rather than for attendants. They were haughty, and gave themselves consequential airs. I could not help smiling and laughing in my sleeve at them. "On my word," I mused, "these people are very happy in bearing the yoke of servitude without feeling it; for, surely, if they felt it, I imagine they would be less haughty in their bearing." I addressed a grave and portly personage who stood at the door of the archbishop's study to open and close it when necessary. I politely asked him if it were not possible to have speech with my lord archbishop. "Wait," he said to me curtly, "his Grace is about to come forth to hear mass; and may give you a moment's audience as he passes." I made no reply, waited patiently, and endeavoured to enter into con-

versation with some of the household, but they merely surveyed me from head to foot, without deigning to reply one syllable. Then they looked at one another and exchanged a haughty smile at the liberty I had taken by intruding upon their conversation.

I confess that I was quite disconcerted at being thus treated by menials. I had not yet wholly recovered from my confusion when the door of the study opened, and the archbishop made his appearance. Immediately there was a deep silence among the officials, who suddenly exchanged their insolent bearing for a respectful one before their master. This prelate was in his sixty-ninth year, and in figure much like my uncle, the Canon Gil Perez, that is to say, stout and short. He was, moreover, very bandy-legged, and so bald, that he had only a tuft of hair on the back of his head, which obliged him to ensconce his p^{te} in a fine woollen cap with long lappets. In spite of all this, I thought that he looked like a nobleman, no doubt because I knew that he was a man of quality. We common people look upon great lords with a foregone conclusion, which often endows them with an air of greatness which nature has denied them.

The archbishop immediately advanced to me, and in a voice of much sweetness asked me what I desired. I told him I was the young man about whom Don Ferdinand de Leyva

had spoken to him. He did not give me time to say any more, but exclaimed—"Ah, is it you, is it you who have been so highly commended to me? I take you in my service at once; you will be a great acquisition to me. Take up your abode here." Having said these words, he moved onwards, supported by two of his attendants, after listening to some of his clergy who had anything to communicate to him. He had hardly left the room when the same attendants who had scorned to speak to me, came up, and now besought me to converse. There they were on every side smirking at me, and assuring me of the pleasure with which they saw me become a member of the archbishop's household. They had heard what their master had said to me, and were very anxious to know in what capacity I was engaged; but I was ill-natured enough not to satisfy their curiosity, in revenge for their insolence.

It was not long before his Grace returned, and called me into his study to speak privately with me. I concluded that he wanted to test my understanding, so I was on my guard, prepared to weigh well all that I said. He examined me first in the classics, and as my answers were not amiss, he perceived that I had a good knowledge of Greek and Latin authors. Next he led up to logic, which was exactly what I wanted. With that subject he found me

thoroughly conversant. "Your education," he said to me with some surprise, "has not been neglected. Now let me see your handwriting." I took out of my pocket a sheet of paper which I had brought for that purpose, and the prelate was not dissatisfied. "I am pleased with your handwriting," he exclaimed, "and still more with your understanding. I shall thank my nephew Don Ferdinand for having procured me such a fine fellow; it is a real present he has made me."

We were interrupted by certain noblemen of Grenada, who had come to dine with the archbishop. I left them together and withdrew among the attendants, who forthwith lavished their attentions on me. When the time arrived I went to dinner with them, and if they scrutinized me during the meal, I also took stock of them. What an air of wisdom there was externally in these ecclesiastics! They struck me as being holy men, so much did the place in which I found myself inspire me with respect. It never once came into my thoughts that this sanctity might be a spurious currency, as though it was impossible to find such a thing under the roof of one of the princes of the church!

I sat next to an old *valet-de-chambre* named Melchior de la Ronda, who took care to help me to the best that was going. I reciprocated his attentions, and my politeness delighted

him. "Señor," he said in a low voice after dinner, "I should like to have a little private talk with you." With this he took me to a part of the palace where we could not be overheard, and there he addressed me as follows: "My lad, I felt prepossessed in your favour as soon as I saw you. Of this I will give you unquestionable proof by imparting to you in confidence what will be of great service to you. You are here in a household where true and pretended believers are mixed together, and as it will take you a very long time before you can know the real state of affairs, I will spare you a study so tedious and so unpleasant by describing to you the characters of every one of them. After that you may easily know how to act."

"I shall begin," he said, "with his Grace. He is a very pious prélate, whose constant occupation is to edify men, leading them to virtue by sermons of his own composition full of excellent morality. He has retired from the court these twenty years, in order to devote himself wholly to his flock. He is a learned man, a great orator, whose sole pleasure is in preaching, and his congregation delight to listen to him. There may be a little vanity in his composition; but besides that, it is not for men to penetrate the heart, it would ill become me to try to find out the faults of a person whose bread I am eating. If I might disapprove of anything in my master, I should blame his severity. Instead

of making allowances for the weaknesses of the clergy, he punishes them too rigorously. He especially prosecutes without mercy those who, relying on their innocence, venture to justify themselves in a legal manner, and condemn his authority. I notice, too, in him another fault, which is common to many persons of quality; though he is very fond of his servants he pays no attention to their services, but lets them grow old in his house without ever thinking of securing them any provision. If at any time he makes them a present, they owe this solely to the kindness of some one who has spoken in their behalf; he would never of himself think of conferring the slightest benefit on them."

This is what the old *valet-de-chambre* told me about his master. He then informed me what he thought of the clergymen with whom we had dined, and drew portraits of them which hardly agreed with their appearance. He did not, indeed, describe them as dishonest men, but only as pretty bad priests. Nevertheless, he made some exceptions, whose virtue he greatly praised. I was no longer shamefaced amongst these gentlemen, and that same evening, during supper, I put on a sage look like themselves. That cost nothing, and we need not be astonished that there are so many hypocrites in the world.

CHAPTER III.

GIL BLAS BECOMES THE ARCHBISHOP OF GRENADA'S
FAVOURITE, AND THE DISPENSER OF HIS
FAVOURS.

IN the afternoon I went to fetch my luggage and my horse from the inn where I had been lodging, after which I returned to supper at the archbishop's palace, where a well-appointed room and a down bed had been prepared for me. On the following day his Grace sent for me early, and gave me a homily to transcribe, enjoining me to copy it with the utmost precision. I did not fail in this, omitting neither accent, point, nor comma; so that the pleasure which he displayed at my performance was mingled with surprise. "Heavenly Father," he cried enraptured, as soon as he had glanced over the sheets of my copy, "was ever aught seen so correct? You are too good a copyist not to be a grammarian. Speak to me frankly, my friend; did you find nothing, as you wrote, which struck you—no negligence of style or inappropriate word that might easily have escaped me in the ardour of composition?" "O! my lord," I replied modestly, "I am not learned enough to make critical observations; and even if I were, I am sure the productions of your Grace would defy

my censure." The prelate smiled at my reply. He made no answer; but I could see, amidst all his piety, that he was not an author for nothing.

By this kind of flattery I completely won his good graces. He liked me better every day, and at length I heard from Don Ferdinand, who often came to see him, that I was so high in his favour that I might consider my fortune made. This was confirmed by my master, some little time afterwards, and in the following manner. One evening he was enthusiastically repeating before me, in his study, a homily which he was to deliver next day in the Cathedral. He did not content himself with asking me what I thought of it in general, but insisted on my telling him what passages struck me most. I was fortunate enough in picking out those which were most to his own taste, his favourite passages. Thus I passed in his mind for a man who had a delicate knowledge of the true beauties of a composition. "This, indeed," he cried, "is what I call having taste and sentiment! Well, friend, you have no Bæotian ear, I can tell you." In a word, he was so pleased with me that he said with some vivacity—"Gil Blas, henceforth you need have no anxiety as to your future. I shall make it my business to procure you a thoroughly pleasant one. I like you, and in proof of this, I shall take you into my inmost confidence."

As soon as I heard these words I fell at his Grace's feet, quite overcome with gratitude. I heartily embraced his bandy legs, and thought myself in a fair way of acquiring a handsome fortune. "Yes, my child," resumed the archbishop, whose speech my action had interrupted, "I will make you the depository of my most secret thoughts. Listen attentively to what I am going to say to you. I take a great pleasure in preaching. The Lord blesses my sermons; they touch sinners' hearts, making them commune with themselves, and bring them to repentance. I have the satisfaction of seeing a miser, terrified at the image I draw of his cupidity, open out his treasures and distribute them with lavish hand; of weaning a sensualist from his pleasures; of filling hermitages with ambitious men; and of strengthening in the path of duty a wife shaken by the seductions of a lover. These conversions, which are of frequent occurrence, should alone suffice to make me labour. And yet, I will confess my weakness to you, I set before myself also another prize, a prize which my scrupulous inclinations vainly reproach me with: it is the praise which the world bestows on a fine and polished style. The honour of being considered a perfect orator has its charms for me. My works are thought as powerful as they are delicate; but I should like particularly to avoid the fault of good authors whose works

are too long before the public, and retire with my reputation untouched.

Therefore, my dear Gil Blas," continued the prelate, "I ask one thing from your zeal. Whenever you shall perceive that my pen shows symptoms of old age, when you'll find my mind flagging, do not fail to warn me of it. I cannot trust myself in this; my self-love might lead me astray. Such criticism requires a disinterested mind; I choose yours because I know its worth, and will rely upon your judgment." "Heaven be praised, my lord, that period is still very distant," I said. "Moreover, a mind cast in such a mould as your Grace's, will maintain itself far better than any other, or to be more exact, you will be always the same. I regard you as a second Cardinal Ximenes, whose lofty genius, instead of growing weaker with age, seemed to derive new strength from it." "No flattery, my friend," he interrupted, "I know that I may fail all at once. At my age a man begins to feel infirmities, and the infirmities of the body affect the mind. I repeat it, Gil Blas; as soon as you consider that my head is not so clear as usual, tell me of it at once. Do not be afraid of being open and sincere; I shall receive such a warning as a proof of your affection for me. Besides, it is in your interest; if, unfortunately for you, it should reach my ears that people say in town that my sermons have

lost their wonted power, and that I ought to rest from my labours, I tell you plainly that you would lose, with my friendship, the provision for life I have promised you. That would be the result of your foolish discretion."

Here my patron stopped to listen to my reply, which was a promise to do as he desired. From that time he concealed nothing from me; I became his favourite. None of the household, except Melchior de la Ronda, saw this without envy. It was curious to observe in what manner the gentlemen and ushers then bore themselves with his Grace's confidant; they were not ashamed to stoop to any meanness to win my goodwill; I could not believe they were Spaniards. I did them good turns, without being the dupe of their interested attentions. At my request the archbishop exerted himself on their behalf. He got a company for one, and put him in a fair way of distinguishing himself in the army. He sent another to Mexico, to fill a good appointment which he had obtained for him,¹ and I secured a handsome present for my friend Melchior. Thus, I perceived that if the archbishop did not anticipate people's desires, at least he rarely refused what was asked of him.

But something which I did for a priest seems

¹ The gentleman who obtained a post in Mexico was called Andrea de Tordesillas, and we shall meet him again later on. See vol. iii. book ix., chapter 4, and book xi., chapter 13.

to me to be worth telling. One day a certain licentiate, named Lewis Garcias, still a young man and of very good appearance, was presented to me by our steward, who said, "Señor Gil Blas, you behold in this worthy clergyman one of my best friends. He was formerly chaplain to a nunnery, but scandal has not respected his virtue. People have slandered him, and he has been suspended; his Grace is unfortunately so prejudiced against him that he will listen to no solicitation in his favour. We have vainly interested persons of the highest rank in Grenada in order to get him reinstated. Our master is inflexible."

"Gentlemen," I said to them, "this business has not been undertaken in a right way. It would have been much better not to prefer any request on behalf of the worthy licentiate; people have been doing him an injury whilst endeavouring to serve him. I know his Grace. Entreaties and recommendations only aggravate in his mind the fault of a clergyman. It is but a very short time ago I heard him saying to himself: 'The more persons a priest who has been guilty of an irregularity induces to speak to me on his behalf, the more he increases the scandal, and the more severe I become.'" "That is unfortunate," said the steward, "and my friend would not know what to do if he did not write a good hand. But luckily he writes magnificently, and keeps his head out

of water by the exercise of his talent." I was curious to see if the writing thus extolled was better than my own. The licentiate, who had a specimen in his pocket, showed me a sheet which I greatly admired, for it seemed the work of a writing-master. Seeing this model of penmanship, an idea came into my head. I begged Garcias to leave the paper with me, telling him that I might possibly do him some service, though I could not explain myself at the moment, but would tell him more next morning. The licentiate, to whom the steward had apparently praised my abilities, went away as much pleased as though he were already restored to his cure.

I was truly anxious that he should be so ; and that same day I set about it. Happening to be alone with the archbishop, I showed him the handwriting of Garcias, and he seemed delighted with it. Then profiting by the opportunity I said to him : " My Lord, as you are determined not to have your homilies printed, I should at least like to see them transcribed in this manner."

" I am satisfied with your writing," replied the prelate ; " but I confess I should not be sorry to have a copy of my works in that hand." " Your Grace," I replied, " has only to speak, for the man who writes so well is a licentiate of my acquaintance. He will be the more pleased to gratify you, as, by these means, he

may be able to appeal to your clemency, to extricate him from the sad condition to which he now has the misfortune to be reduced."

The prelate did not fail to ask me the name of this licentiate. I replied: "It is Lewis Garcias, who is in despair at having incurred your displeasure." "That Garcias," he interrupted, "if I am not mistaken, was chaplain in a nunnery, and has incurred ecclesiastical censure. I still remember the reports which were sent against him; his morals are not the most exemplary." "My lord," I interrupted, in my turn, "I will not attempt to justify him; but I know that he has enemies. He asserts that the authors of the reports which you have received were more bent on doing him an ill turn than on telling the truth." "That may be," replied the archbishop; "there are a good many dangerous people in the world. Besides, granted that his conduct has not always been irreproachable, he may have repented; in short, there is mercy for all our transgressions. Bring this licentiate before me; I remove his suspension."

Thus the most austere men abate their severity when their warmest interests are opposed to it. The archbishop readily granted, for the sake of the vain pleasure of having his productions well written, what he had refused to the most influential solicitations. I quickly carried the news to the steward, who imparted it to

his friend Garcias. Next day the licentiate came to thank me in a manner commensurate with the favour obtained. I presented him to my master, who contented himself with slightly reprimanding him, and put some homilies into his hand to make a fair copy of. Garcias acquitted himself so well that he was re-instated in the ministry. He even obtained the living of Gabia, a large hamlet in the neighbourhood of Grenada, which plainly proves that benefices are not always given according to merit.¹

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARCHBISHOP HAS A FIT OF APOPLEXY.

GIL BLAS' DILEMMA AND ITS RESULT.

WHILST I was thus rendering services to various people, Don Fernand de Leyva was preparing to leave Grenada. I called on that nobleman before his departure, to thank him once more for the excellent post he had procured me. I showed myself so highly pleased with it that he said to me, "My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted that you like my uncle the archbishop." "I am charmed by that great prelate," I replied, "and so I ought to be. Not only is his

¹ In the fifth chapter of this same book it will be seen how the licentiate Garcias proves his gratitude to Gil Blas.

lordship very amiable, but he shows me kindnesses which I can never sufficiently acknowledge. Nothing less could have consoled me for being separated from Don Cæsar and his son." "I am persuaded," he said, "that they are both chagrined at having lost you. But perhaps you are not separated for ever; fortune may some day bring you together again." I did not hear these words without being affected. I sighed, and felt at that moment so great a friendship for Don Alphonso that I would gladly have given up the archbishop, and the fair prospects that he held out to me, to return to the castle of Leyva, if the obstacle which had driven me away were removed. Don Fernand perceived my emotion, and was so pleased by it that he embraced me, saying that his whole family would always take great interest in my fate.

Two months after this gentleman had gone, during the height of my favour, we had a great alarm at the episcopal palace. The Archbishop was seized with a fit of apoplexy. He was so promptly attended to, and had such judicious medical treatment, that a few days later there was no trace of it remaining. But his mind had received a severe shock. I could not help noticing it in the very first sermon which he composed; but I did not think the difference between it and his former efforts so remarkable as to warrant the inference

that the orator was beginning to fall off. I waited for a second homily to judge more clearly what I ought to do. But that was decisive. Sometimes the good prelate repeated himself, sometimes he soared too high or descended too low. It was a prolix discourse, with the reasoning of a superannuated schoolmaster, a regular monk's sermon.¹

I was not the only person who noticed it. The audience at large, as though they also were bound over to examine it, said to each other in low tones: "Here is a sermon that smacks of apoplexy." "Now, Critic of sermons," I said to myself, "prepare to do your duty. You see that his Grace begins to fail; you should warn him of it, not only as the depository of his thoughts, but also lest any one of his friends should be frank enough to anticipate you. In that case you know what would happen; you would be struck out of his will, where there is doubtless a better legacy for you than the library of the licentiate Sedillo."

After these reflexions came others of a contrary nature. Such a warning seemed to me difficult to convey. I thought that an author enamoured of his works might take it ill; but rejecting this suggestion I represented to myself that it was impossible he should

¹ The original has *capucinade*; a sarcasm on the sermons of the Capuchin friars, which were not remarkable for correctness.

receive it amiss after having so urgently exacted it from me. Besides, I intended to speak to him adroitly, and thus induce him to swallow the pill without reluctance. In fine, thinking that I risked more by keeping silence than by breaking it, I resolved to speak.

The only thing that embarrassed me now, was that I did not know how to set about it. Fortunately the orator himself extricated me from this difficulty, by asking what people, at large, said of him, and whether they were pleased with his last sermon. I replied that his homilies were always admired, but that the last appeared not to have affected his audience so much as the previous ones. "How so, friend," he rejoined with astonishment; "did it encounter an Aristarchos?"¹ "No, my lord, no," I replied. "Your works are not of the kind that one ventures to criticise; everyone is charmed by them. Nevertheless, since you enjoined me to be open and sincere, I shall take the liberty of saying to you that your last sermon does not seem to me quite as powerful as those that preceded it. Do you not agree with me?"

At these words my master grew pale, and said to me with a forced smile—"Master Gil Blas, this sermon then is not to your liking?"

¹ Aristarchos of Byzantium, who lived in the second century before Christ, and compiled the rhapsodies of Homer, was the Prince of Critics.

"I did not mean to say that, my lord," I broke in, quite disconcerted. "I think it excellent, though slightly inferior to your former productions." "I understand you," he replied. "You seem to imagine I am falling off. Is it not so? Come, be plain. You consider that it is time for me to think about retiring?" "I should not have been so bold," I said, to speak to you so freely if your Grace had not commanded me. I, therefore, am only obeying you, and I most humbly pray that you will not be offended at my presumption." "Heaven forbid," he hastily interrupted, "Heaven forbid that I should reproach you! I should be very unjust if I did. I do not take it at all amiss that you tell me what you think. It is only your opinion that I find fault with; I have been most egregiously deceived by your want of intellect."

Though I was disconcerted, I endeavoured to find some qualification, to set things right again. But how was I to appease an irritated author, and especially an author accustomed to hear himself praised? "Let us say no more about it, my lad," he said, "you are still too young to discriminate the true from the false. I tell you I have never composed a better sermon than the one which is unhappy enough not to have received your approval. My mind, thank Heaven! has not yet lost its vigour. Henceforth, I will choose my con-



fidants with more caution, and employ people of greater ability than you. Go," he pursued, shoving me out of his study by the shoulders, "go and tell my treasurer to give you a hundred ducats, and Heaven be your guide with that sum! Farewell, Master Gil Blas, I wish you every kind of prosperity, with a little more taste."

CHAPTER V.

THE COURSE WHICH GIL BLAS TOOK AFTER THE ARCHBISHOP HAD DISMISSED HIM. HOW HE MET ACCIDENTALLY THE LICENTIAE WHO WAS UNDER SO GREAT AN OBLIGATION TO HIM, AND THE TOKENS OF GRATITUDE WHICH HE RECEIVED FROM THE LATTER.

I LEFT the study, cursing the capriciousness, or rather the weakness, of the archbishop, and more enraged against him than annoyed at having lost his favour. I even hesitated for some time as to whether I should draw my hundred ducats, but after mature deliberation I was not such a fool as to refuse them. I considered that my receiving this money would not deprive me of the right of making fun of the prelate, which I promised myself I would do, whenever the subject of his homilies was introduced before me.

I went, therefore, and asked the treasurer for the hundred ducats, without telling him a word of what had passed between his master and myself. I then went in quest of Melchior de la Ronda, to say farewell to him for ever. He liked me too much not to sympathise with my misfortune. While I was relating my story to him I saw grief strongly imprinted on his countenance. In spite of all his respect for the archbishop he could not help blaming him; but, when in my anger I swore that the prelate should suffer for it, and that I would make the whole town laugh at his expense, the prudent Melchior said to me:—"Take my advice, my dear Gil Blas, and rather pocket the affront. People of an inferior rank should always respect persons of quality, whatever cause of complaint they may have against them. It must be admitted that there are very mean noblemen who scarcely deserve consideration, but they can do mischief, and it is best to fear them."

I thanked the old *valet-de-chambre* for the good advice he had given me, and promised to profit by it. After that he said to me:—"If you go to Madrid, be sure you call upon my nephew, Joseph Navarro. He is the factotum of Don Balthasar de Zuniga, and I assure you he is a young fellow worthy of your friendship. He is open, cheerful, obliging, and courteous; I wish you to become acquainted with him." I

promised I would not fail to go and see Joseph Navarro as soon as I got to Madrid, whither I thought of returning in due time. Then I left the episcopal palace, never to set foot in it again. If I had still had my horse I should perhaps have set out for Toledo at once, but I had sold it during the period of my favour, believing I should not need it again. I resolved to hire a furnished room, as I had made up my mind to stay for a month in Grenada, and then to go to the Count of Polan's.

As dinner-time approached, I asked my landlady if there was any eating-house in the neighbourhood. She answered that there was an excellent one a few steps from her house, which afforded good accommodation, and was much frequented by respectable people. I made her direct me to it, and went there soon after. I was shown into a large room, somewhat like a refectory, where ten or a dozen men, seated at a long table covered with a dirty cloth, were conversing together, whilst each was eating his small portion. They brought me my allowance, which at another time would doubtless have made me regret the table I had just lost. But I was at that moment so incensed against the archbishop, that the frugality of my eating-house seemed preferable to the good cheer of the palace. I blamed an abundance of dishes at a meal, and, arguing like a certain Valladolid

doctor,¹ I said, "Woe to those people who frequent those pernicious tables where you have continually to be on your guard against sensuality, for fear of overloading your stomach! However little we may eat, do we not always eat enough?" In my surly humour I praised those maxims which I had hitherto greatly neglected.

As I was getting through my dinner, without fearing that I should exceed the bounds of temperance, the licentiate Lewis Garcias, who had become vicar of Gabia in the manner which I have described, entered the room. The moment he recognised me, he came to salute me with the utmost eagerness; indeed with all the demonstrations of a man who is extremely delighted. He clasped me in his arms, and I was obliged to undergo a very long complimentary speech upon the service I had rendered him. He actually wearied me by his display of gratitude. He took his seat next me, saying, "By Heaven, my dear patron, since my good fortune has made me meet you, we shall not separate without a glass. But as there is no good wine in this house, I will take you, if you please, after our little dinner, to a place where I will treat you to a bottle of the mellowest Luceno,² and a glass of exquisite

¹ An allusion to the doctrine of Doctor Sangrado. (See vol. i. bk. ii. ch. 3.)

² A peasant of Luceno is also mentioned in the story Captain Rolando tells to Gil Blas. (See vol. i. bk. iii. ch. 2).

muscadine of Foncaral. We must indulge in this excess; I beg you not to deny me this satisfaction. Would I had the happiness of having you even for a few days in my parsonage at Gabia! You should be received there as a generous Mæcnas, to whom I owe the easy and tranquil life I lead."

Whilst he was speaking thus, his dinner was brought to him. He began to eat, though without ceasing to flatter me at intervals. I seized the opportunity of speaking in my turn, and as he did not fail to ask me for news of his friend the steward, I did not conceal from him that I had quitted the archbishop's service. I even told him the smallest details of my disgrace, to which he listened with great attention. After all that he had just been saying, who would not have expected to hear him declaim against the archbishop, and be very sorry for me to whom he owed some gratitude? But this was furthest from his thoughts. On the contrary, he became distant and pensive, and finished his dinner without uttering another word. Then, rising suddenly from the table, he bade me good day in an icy manner, and disappeared. The ungrateful man, seeing me no longer in a position to serve him, did not even take the trouble of concealing his sentiments. I only laughed at his ingratitude, and looking at him with all the scorn which he deserved, I called out loud enough for him

to hear me: "Hark ye, you sage chaplain of nuns, go and give orders to cool that delicious wine of Luceno with which you promised to regale me."

CHAPTER VI.

GIL BLAS GOES TO THE THEATRE AT GRENADA. HIS
ASTONISHMENT AT THE SIGHT OF A CERTAIN
ACTRESS, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

GARCIAS was no sooner out of the room when two gentlemen very well dressed came in, who sat down close by me. They began to talk about the actors of the Grenada company, and of a new comedy which was then being played. This piece, according to their account, was making a great sensation in the town. I resolved to go and see it that very evening. I had not visited a theatre since I had been in Grenada. As I had almost always lived in the archbishop's palace, where going to the play was proscribed, I had taken care not to indulge in such a pleasure. Sermons had been my only amusement.

I, therefore, went at the proper time to the theatre, where I found a very full house. All around me discussions were going on about the piece before the curtain drew up, and I observed

that everybody undertook to criticise it. Some were for, and others were against it. "Was there ever a play better written?" said a gentleman on my right. "What a wretched style!" cried some one on my left. In truth, if there are many bad authors, it must be confessed that there are still a larger number of bad critics. And when I think of the mortification which dramatic poets have to suffer, I wonder that any man should be found bold enough to brave the ignorance of the multitude, and the dangerous censure of the half-instructed, who sometimes corrupt the judgment of the public.

At length the *gracioso*¹ came forward to open

¹ The *gracioso* is the Spanish fool, who with cap, bells, and truncheon takes part in every event of the play, and not seldom laughs at his audience. He assumes both the character of a spectator and an actor, sometimes interrupts the performance with his critical remarks, often steps forward, discloses the secret of the plot, and decides who shall be married and who shall be killed. Ticknor in his *History of Spanish Literature*, second period, ch. xviii., says, "Another element which Lope de Vega established in the Spanish drama was the comic underplot. Nearly all his plays . . . have it; sometimes in a pastoral form, but generally as a simple admixture of farce. The characters contained in this portion of each of his dramas are as much standing masks as those in the graver portion, and were perfectly well known under the name of the *graciosos* and *graciosas*, or drolls, to which was afterwards added the *vegete*, or a little, old, testy esquire, who is always boasting of his descent, and is often employed in teasing the *gracioso*. . . . Lope first introduced it into the 'France-silla,' where the oldest of the tribe, under the name of Tristan, was represented by Rios, a famous actor of his time, and produced a great effect;—an event which . . . occurred . . . before

the play. As soon as he appeared he was saluted with a general clapping of hands, which showed me that he was one of those spoiled actors to whom the pit forgives everything. In fact, this actor did not say a word or make a gesture without being applauded. The pleasure of the audience at seeing him was too perceptible, and he abused his privilege. I saw that he sometimes forgot himself on the stage, and put the partiality of the audience to too severe a test. If he had been hissed instead of applauded, he would frequently have received his due.

There was likewise clapping of hands at the sight of several other performers, and especially for an actress who played the part of a chamber-maid. I looked at her attentively, and no words can express my surprise when I recognised in her Laura, my dear Laura, whom I supposed to be still in Madrid with Arsenia. There could be no doubt of her identity. Her figure, her features, the sound of her voice, all assured me that I was not mistaken. How-

the year 1602. From this time the *gracioso* is found in nearly all of his plays, and in nearly every other play produced on the Spanish stage, from which it passed, first to the French, and then to all the other theatres of modern times. . . . The *gracioso* is skilfully turned to account, by being made partly to ridicule the heroic extravagances and rhodomontade of the leading personages, and partly to shield the author himself from rebuke by good-humouredly confessing for him that he was quite aware he deserved it." The Countess of Aulnoy in the second letter of her *Relation* speaks also of *el gracioso*.

ever, as I distrusted the evidence of my eyes and my ears, I asked her name of a gentleman who was sitting beside me. "Why, where do you come from?" he said. "You are apparently just arrived, since you do not know the lovely Estella." The likeness was too complete for me to be mistaken. It was easy to understand that Laura, when changing her condition, had also changed her name; and curious to know something about her, since the public rarely ignore the private life of theatrical characters, I enquired of the same gentleman if this Estella were courted by any lover of importance. He informed me that, for the last two months, a Portuguese nobleman, of high rank, in Grenada, named the Marquis of Marialva, had laid out a great deal of money on her. He might have told me more if I had not feared to annoy him by my questions. I was more occupied by what this gentleman had just told me than by the comedy; and if anyone had asked me what the play was about, when I left the theatre, he would have puzzled me very much. I could do nothing but muse about Laura, about Estella, and I promised myself to go and see this actress on the following day. I was not without anxiety as to the reception I should meet with, and had reason to think that my appearance would not give her great pleasure in the brilliant condition of her affairs; I

even thought that so good an actress, in order to be avenged upon a man with whom she certainly had cause to be displeased, might well pretend not to know him. All this did not alter my resolution. After a light meal, for none but such were to be had at my inn, I retired to my room, with an anxious longing for the morrow.

I slept little that night, and rose at day-break. But as it seemed to me that the mistress of a great lord would not be visible so early in the morning, I spent three or four hours in dressing, getting shaved, powdered, and perfumed before going to her house. I wanted to appear before her in a condition which would not make her blush to see me again. About ten o'clock I sallied forth, and repaired to her house, after asking for her address at the hotel where the actors were living.¹ She occupied the best apartments in a large mansion. I told a lady's-maid who opened the door that a young man desired to speak to Mistress Estella. The maid went in to give my message, when all at once I heard her mistress say in a very loud voice, "Who is the young man? What does he want? Let him come in."

From this I judged that I had chosen an unseasonable time for my visit, that her Portuguese lover was at her toilet, and that she

¹ This appears to be the *posada de los representantes*. See the INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. i., pages xviii. and xxxii.

spoke so loudly only to convince him that she was not the sort of girl to receive doubtful messages. It was even as I had imagined; for the Marquis of Marialva spent most of his mornings with her. So I expected a bad reception; but this model actress ran forward with open arms, on beholding me, exclaiming as if excited: "O! my dear brother! is it you whom I behold?" Whilst uttering these words she embraced me repeatedly, and then, turning to the Portuguese, said: "My lord, pardon me for yielding to the force of nature in your presence. After an absence of three years I cannot see again a brother whom I tenderly love without giving him some proofs of my affection. Well, my dear Gil Blas," she continued, addressing me again, "tell me some news about the family: how did you leave them?"

This speech embarrassed me at first, but I soon divined Laura's intentions; and seconding her device, I answered her in a manner suited to the scene we were to act—"Heaven be praised, sister, our parents are in good health." "I have no doubt," she replied, "that you are astonished to find me an actress at Grenada; but do not condemn me without hearing me. Three years ago, as you may recollect, my father thought he was settling me well, when he gave me in marriage to Captain Antonio Coello, who took me from the Asturias to

Madrid, his native place. Six months after our arrival, in an affair of honour, which he brought upon himself by his violent temper, he killed a gentleman, who thought fit to pay me some attentions, and who was related to some influential persons of rank. My husband, who had scarcely any influence, escaped to Catalonia with all the jewels and ready money we had in the house. He then embarked at Barcelona, went over to Italy, enlisted in the Venetian service; and finally lost his life in the Morea,¹ fighting against the Turks. Meanwhile, an estate, which was our only property, had been confiscated, and I became one of the poorest of widows. What was I to do in such a pressing emergency? A young widow, if she be honourable, is in a very awkward situation. I could not return to the Asturias, and, moreover, what should I have done there? I should have received no consolation from my family, but merely condolences. On the other hand, I had been too well brought up to think of adopting a life of dishonour. What other course could I follow? I became an actress to preserve my reputation."

I was so strongly tempted to laugh when I heard Laura wind up her romance in such a style that I could scarcely refrain from giving way to it. But I did refrain, and I even

¹ The Morea was conquered by the Venetians from the Turks in the year 1684.

said to her, gravely, "My dear sister, I approve of your conduct, and I am glad to meet with you in Grenada so honourably settled."

The Marquis of Marialva, who had not lost a word of all these speeches, implicitly believed every syllable that Don Antonio's widow was pleased to say. He joined in the conversation, and asked me if I had any occupation in Grenada or elsewhere. I hesitated for a moment whether I should tell a falsehood, but, thinking it would be unnecessary, I spoke the truth. I related in detail how I had entered the archbishop's service, and how I had left him, which vastly amused the Portuguese nobleman. It is true that, in spite of my promise to Melchior, I made myself a little merry at the expense of his Grace. But the best of the joke was, that Laura, who fancied that I was following her example, by telling a story of my own invention, burst into fits of laughter, which she would not have done had she known that I was speaking the truth.

After having come to the end of my story, which I finished by mentioning the lodging I had engaged, dinner was announced. I was about to withdraw instantly, and dine at my inn, but Laura prevented me, saying, "What are you thinking of, brother? You must dine here. Indeed, I cannot permit you to stay any longer in lodgings; you must positively board and come and live in my house. Order your lug-

gage to be sent here this very evening ; there is a spare bed for you."

The Portuguese nobleman, whom this hospitality possibly did not greatly please, interfered, and said to Laura, " No, Estella, you have not sufficient accommodation to receive anyone in the house. Your brother," he added, " seems to me a fine fellow, and the circumstance of his being so closely connected with you, makes me take a great interest in him. He shall enter my service, and be my favourite secretary and my right-hand man. Let him be sure to come and sleep at my house to-night ; I will order a room to be prepared for him. I will allow him a salary of four hundred ducats a year, and if afterwards I have reason, as I hope, to be satisfied with him, I will put him in such a position as will console him for having been over-candid with his archbishop."

I hereupon thanked the Marquis, and so did Laura, whose panegyric powers far exceeded mine. " Say no more about it," he replied ; " the matter is settled." With these words he bade farewell to his theatrical princess and departed. Laura at once took me into a little room, where, seeing we were alone, she cried, " I should suffocate if I resisted any longer my inclination to laugh." Then she threw herself into an arm-chair, and, holding her sides, laughed immoderately as if she had lost her senses. It was impossible for me to





avoid following her example, and when we had indulged ourselves to our hearts' content, she said—"Confess, Gil Blas, that we have just been acting an amusing comedy. But I did not expect such a catastrophe. I only meant to secure you board and lodging; and in order to be able to offer it with propriety, I passed you off for my brother. I am delighted that fate has procured you so good a berth. The Marquis of Marialva is a nobleman of liberal sentiments, who will do still more for you than he has promised. Any other woman," she pursued, "might not have received so kindly a man, who leaves his friends without bidding them farewell. But I am one of those good-natured creatures who are always glad to meet again a rogue whom they have once loved."

I frankly acknowledged my want of politeness, for which I entreated her pardon. After this explanation she led the way to a very handsome dining-room, where we sat down to table, and as we were attended by a lady's-maid and a man-servant, we addressed each other as brother and sister. After dinner we returned to the same little room where we had previously been conversing; and there my paragon of a Laura, abandoning herself to her natural liveliness, asked me to relate to her all that had happened to me since our separation. I gave her a full and particular account of

everything, and when I had satisfied her curiosity, she gratified mine by narrating her own adventures in the following words.

CHAPTER VII.

LAURA'S STORY.

I SHALL tell you, as briefly as possible, what circumstances led me to adopt the theatrical profession.

After you had so politely deserted me, great events took place. My mistress, Arsenia, rather wearied of the pleasures of the world than disgusted with them, forswore the stage, and took me with her to a fine estate which she had just purchased in the neighbourhood of Zamora, with the money which her lovers had given her. We soon made acquaintances in that town, went there pretty frequently to spend a day or two, and then returned to shut ourselves up in our mansion.

During one of these little trips Don Felix Maldonado, the corregidor's only son, happened to see me, and took a liking to me. He sought an opportunity of speaking to me in private; and, not to hide anything from you, I rather contrived to bring it about. That gentleman was not twenty, as handsome as Cupid himself, very well made, and still more attractive by

his gallant and generous manners than by his figure. He offered me, with such winning ways and so persistently, a large diamond ring which he took from his own finger, that I could not refuse to accept it. I was only too delighted with such a lovable swain; but what an absurdity for girls of our sort to become attached to young fellows of good family whose fathers hold official situations! The corregidor, who was one of the strictest of his class, being informed of our understanding, hastened to prevent its consequences. He had me apprehended by a troop of alguazils, who carried me off, in spite of my cries, to the House of Correction.¹

There, without any further formality, the lady-superior ordered me to be deprived of my ring and my clothes, and to be dressed in a long gown of grey serge, fastened round my waist with a black leather strap, from which hung a large-beaded rosary² reaching down to my heels. After this they took me into a hall where there was an old monk of some order or another, who began to preach repentance, almost in the same way that Dame Leonarda exhorted you to have patience in the underground cave. He told me that I ought to be very much obliged to those people who had caused me to be shut up; that they had done

¹ In the original *l'hôpital de la Piété*.

² See INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, vol. i. a, page xxx.

me a great service by rescuing me from the snares of the devil, wherein I was unhappily caught. But I must frankly confess my ingratitude; and far from feeling obliged to those who had done me this favour, I loaded them with curses.

I spent eight days full of desolation; but on the ninth—for I counted the very minutes—my fate seemed inclined to change. As I was crossing a little court, I met the bursar of the house, a man to whom everybody was subordinate, and whom the lady-superior herself obeyed. He gave an account of his management to none but to the corregidor, on whom alone he was dependent, and whose confidence in him was unbounded. His name was Pedro Zendono, a native of the small town of Salcedo,¹ in Biscay. Imagine a tall, pale, haggard man, with a countenance which might have served as a model for the penitent thief. He hardly seemed to look at the sisters; you never saw such a hypocritical face though you have lived in an archbishop's palace.

Well then, she continued, I met this Mr Zendono, who stopped me and said—"Be comforted, my girl, I am touched by your misfortunes." He said no more, and went on

¹ Mr Llorente says that Zendono ought to be called Zenzano, because a village in the province of Rioja, near Logrono, is so named, and that Salsedon, for so Lesage spells it, should be written Salcedo, a village in the province of Alava, in Biscay.

his way, leaving me to make what comment I pleased upon so laconic a text. As I thought him a good man I simply imagined that he had taken the trouble to inquire why I had been confined; and that, finding me not sufficiently guilty to deserve such unworthy treatment, he intended to be of service to me with the corregidor. I did not know the Biscayan; his intentions were very different. He revolved in his mind the plan of a journey, which he confided to me some days afterwards. "My dear Laura," he said, "your sufferings have taken such deep possession of my mind that I am resolved to end them. I am perfectly aware that this implies my own ruin; but I am no longer master of myself, and I intend to live only for you. Your situation pierces me to the heart. To-morrow I intend to take you out of prison and carry you in person to Madrid; I will sacrifice everything to the pleasure of being your deliverer."

I was near fainting with joy at these words of Zendono, who, concluding from my thanks that I asked no better than to escape, had the boldness on the following day to carry me off publicly, in the manner I shall describe. He told the lady-superior that he had orders to take me before the corregidor, who was at a country-house, a couple of leagues out of town; and then, with the utmost assurance, he took me with him in a post-chaise drawn by

two strong mules, which he had bought for the purpose. Our only attendant was a servant who drove the chaise, and who was entirely devoted to the bursar. We began trundling along, not as I had expected in the direction of Madrid, but towards the frontiers of Portugal, where we arrived before the corregidor of Zamora could hear of our flight, and set his sleuth-hounds on our track.

Before we entered Braganza the Biscayan made me assume man's clothes, which he had had the forethought to provide; and looking on me now as fairly launched in the same boat with him, he said to me at the inn where we put up—"Lovely Laura, do not be displeased with me for having brought you to Portugal. The corregidor of Zamora will have us hunted down in our native country, as two criminals to whom Spain ought not to give an asylum. But," he added, "we may set his revenge at defiance in this foreign land, although it is now subjected to Spanish rule.¹ We shall at least be safer here than in our own country. Be persuaded, my dear, and do not leave a man who adores you. Let us go and settle at Coimbra. There I will get employed as a spy of the Inquisition; and under cover of this redoubtable tribunal, our days will glide on with impunity in ease and pleasure."

¹ This is the first allusion to Portugal in this work, if we except the history of Don Pompeyo de Castro (vol. i., bk. 3, chap. 7.)

This cool proposal showed me that I had to deal with a gentleman who did not care to act as a guide to damsels for the mere glory of chivalry. I saw that he reckoned a good deal on my gratitude, and still more on my distress. However, though they both spoke greatly in his favour, I rejected his proposal with disdain. It is true that on my own side I had two strong reasons to show myself so reserved: I did not like him, and I did not think him rich. But when, returning to the charge, he offered to marry me as a preliminary, and showed me plainly that his stewardship had put him in funds for a long time, I will not deny that I began to listen to him. I was dazzled by the gold and jewels which he displayed before me, and I learned that interest can produce metamorphoses as well as love. My Biscayan gradually became another man in my eyes. His tall, spare body seemed an elegant shape, and his pallor a becoming white; I even favourably rechristened his hypocritical air. Then, without repugnance, I accepted his hand before Heaven, which he invoked to witness our engagement. After this, he met with no contradiction from me. We resumed our journey; and in a short time Coimbra saw a new household within its walls.

My husband bought me some fine dresses, and gave me several diamonds, amongst which I recognised that of Don Felix Maldonado.

There was nothing further wanting to let me divine whence came all the precious stones which I had seen, and to be morally certain that I had not married a rigid observer of the seventh commandment.¹ But, considering myself as the main cause of his light-fingered tricks, I forgave him. A woman excuses the misdeeds which her beauty prompts men to commit. Otherwise, I should have thought him a very wicked man indeed.

I was fairly satisfied with him for two or three months. He was always gallant in his behaviour, and appeared to love me tenderly. Nevertheless, the affection which he displayed for me was only feigned. The rogue deceived me, and reserved for me the treatment which every girl seduced by a dishonest man may expect. One morning, on my return from mass, I found in our house nothing but the bare walls; the furniture and my very clothes had been carried off. Zondono and his faithful servant had taken their measures so well that in less than an hour the whole place had been thoroughly stripped; so that, with nothing but the clothes I had on, and Don Felix's ring, which I fortunately had on my finger, I found myself like another Ariadne, abandoned by an ungrateful wretch. But I assure you I did not amuse myself with composing elegies on my

¹ "Thou shalt not steal" is the seventh commandment in the Roman Catholic decalogue, but the eighth in the Protestant one.

misfortune; I rather thanked Heaven for ridding me of a wretch who could not fail sooner or later to fall into the hands of the law. I regarded as lost the time we had spent together, and some day or other I should have to make it up. If I had cared to stay in Portugal, and attach myself to some lady of rank, I might easily have found a place; but whether I loved my native country, or whether I was drawn by my star, which had a better fortune in store for me, I only thought of returning to Spain. I went to a jeweller, who gave me the value of my diamond ring in golden coins, and I took my departure with an old Spanish lady who was going to Seville in a post-chaise.

This lady, whose name was Dorothea, had been to see one of her relatives, settled in Coimbra, and was returning to Seville, where she lived. There was such a sympathy between us that we became fast friends from the first day of our acquaintance; and our friendship was so much strengthened on the journey that, on our arrival, the lady insisted that I should make her house my home. I had no cause to repent having made such an acquaintance. Never was there a woman of a more charming character. From her features and her vivacity one could still perceive that formerly many guitars must have been thrummed under her window. Indeed, she had been left a widow

by various husbands of noble birth, and lived honourably on her settlements.

Among other excellent qualities she possessed that one of feeling much compassion for the misfortunes of young women. When I confided mine to her, she entered so warmly into my interests that she loaded Zendono with a thousand imprecations. "What villains these men are!" she said, in such a tone as to lead one to fancy that she too had met with a bursar in her time—"The wretches! There are many scoundrels like that in the world who make it their sport to deceive women. What consoles me, my dear child," she continued, "is that, according to your account, you are in no way bound to that faithless Biscayan. If your marriage with him was good enough to serve as an excuse, on the other hand it is bad enough to permit you to contract a better, whenever you may get an opportunity."

I went out every day with Dorothea either to church, or to visit her friends; it was just the way to light upon an adventure. I attracted the notice of several gentlemen, some of whom were pleased to try and discover my intentions. They communicated with my elderly hostess; but some had not wherewithal to defray the expense of an establishment, and others were still under age,¹ which alone was enough to destroy all my inclination

¹ The original has "had not even assumed the *toga virilis*."

to listen to them, for I knew the consequences. One day Dorothea and I took a fancy to visit the theatre at Seville. The famous comedy, "The Ambassador on his own account," composed by Lope de Vega Carpio,"¹ was announced to be played.

Amongst the actresses who appeared on the stage I discovered one of my old friends, and recognised Phenicia, that bouncing, merry girl whom you have seen as Florimonda's maid, and with whom you have supped at Arsenia's more than once. I knew that Phenicia had left Madrid more than two years ago, but I had never heard of her turning actress. I was so impatient to embrace her that I thought the piece very tedious. It was, perhaps, also the fault of those who acted it, and who did not play well enough, or ill enough to amuse me.

¹ Felix Lope de Vega Carpio, a very fertile Spanish poet, after having been twice married, became a priest, and died in 1635 a knight of Malta, at the age of seventy-two. He wrote more than eighteen hundred comedies and four hundred *autos sacramentales*, or plays to be represented in the open air, besides several poems of considerable length. It is said that he usually wrote a comedy in one day. The "Ambassador on his own account" is not to be found in the lists which the late Lord Holland gives of Lope's pieces, but it was very common for Spanish plays to have two titles. Lesage calls Lope's comedy, *La famosa Comedia, el Embaxador de si-mismo*. Ticknor says in his *History of Spanish Literature*, second period, ch. xxvi., "From an early period managers seem to have given the acted plays the title which full length Spanish dramas almost uniformly bore during the seventeenth century and even afterwards—that of *comedia famosa*." The Countess d'Aulnoy uses also the words *comedias famosas* in the second letter of her *Relation*.

For I, who am merry by nature, find no less amusement, I must confess, in a perfectly ridiculous than in a most finished actor.

At length the moment I was waiting for had come, to wit, the end of the famous comedy. The widow and I went behind the scenes, where we caught a glimpse of Phenicia playing the amiable, and listening with an affected air to the gentle chirping of a young bird who had evidently suffered himself to be caught by the bird-lime of her declamation. As soon as she perceived me she left him in a courteous manner, ran up to me with open arms, and lavished on me all sorts of friendly caresses. I heartily embraced her, and we mutually expressed our joy at seeing each other again; but as neither time nor place permitted us to enter into a long conversation, we put it off until next morning, when we might speak more freely at her lodgings.

The pleasure of talking is one of the most intense passions of women, and especially of myself. I could not close my eyes all night, so anxious was I to meet Phenicia and ply her with a thousand questions. Heaven knows whether I was long in getting up, in order to go where she had told me she lived. She lodged with the rest of the company in a large boarding-house.¹ A maid-servant whom I met on

¹ The actors at Seville seem not to have lodged in the theatre itself. See note i., page 332.

entering, and whom I asked to show me Phenicia's room, led the way upstairs to a gallery, along which were ten or a dozen little rooms, separated only by deal partitions, and occupied by the light-hearted company. My guide knocked at a door which was at once opened by Phenicia, whose tongue itched as well as my own. We hardly allowed ourselves time to sit down before we began to chatter, and were soon in a fair way to have everything out. We had so many things to ask about, that our questions and answers followed each other with surprising volubility. After having related our adventures to each other, and enquired into the present condition of our affairs, Phenicia asked me what I meant to do: "for really," she said, "you must do something; no person of your age should be useless in society." I replied that I had made up my mind, till better things turned up, to enter into the service of a young lady of rank. "For shame!" exclaimed my friend, "you shall not think of such a thing. Is it possible, darling, that you are not yet disgusted with menial service? Are you not tired of having to give way to the will of others, of humouring their caprices, of being scolded—in a word, of being a downright slave? Why not rather adopt the stage, and follow my example? Nothing can be more suitable for people of intelligence who have neither wealth

nor birth. It gives you a position just between the nobility and the middle-class, and a liberal profession, free from the most troublesome conventionalities of ordinary life. Our income is paid in hard cash by the public, who are our bankers. We live in a continual round of pleasure, and spend our money as we earn it."

"The stage," she continued, "is favourable above all to women. When I was living with Florimonda—I blush when I think of it—I was reduced to listen to the 'supers' of the Prince's company. Not a gentleman paid attention to me. Why was that? Because I was always in the background. The finest picture does not strike one if it is not in a suitable light. But since I have been on a proper footing, that is to say, on the stage, what a change! The gayest young men of the towns through which we pass are at my heels. An actress, therefore, has plenty of comforts in her profession. If she is discreet, I mean if she only favours one lover at a time, it does her all the credit in the world; her modesty is praised, and when she changes her gallant, she is considered like a genuine widow who marries again. More than that; a widow, if she takes a third husband, is looked upon with contempt, and is said to offend against delicacy; while an actress seems to become the more in vogue in proportion as she extends the number of her favourites.

After a hundred gallantries she is still considered a dainty dish for a nobleman."¹

"Whom do you think you are talking to?" I broke in at this point. "Do you imagine me to be ignorant of these advantages? I have often conned them over in my mind; and to be candid, they have only too many attractions for a girl of my character. I have an inclination for the stage; but that is not enough; some talent is indispensable, and I have none. I have sometimes tried to recite passages from plays to Arsenia; but she was never satisfied with me, and that disgusted me with the profession." "You are not difficult to discourage," replied Phenicia; "do you not know that these great actresses are generally jealous? They fear, in spite of their vanity, that some new-comer will eclipse them. In short, in such a matter, I should not trust to Arsenia; for she did not give her real opinion. In my judgment, and without flattery, I think you were born for the stage. You are natural, you have a free and graceful carriage, a sweet voice, a lovely bust, and a pretty face into the bargain. Ah, you rogue, you will charm many a gentleman if once you turn actress!"

¹ Nearly all the travels in Spain which have been consulted, and which were printed before 1715, speak of the immorality of the Spanish noblemen, and of their custom of becoming *amancebados* of some actress. See the twelfth letter of the Countess d'Aulnoy's *Relation*.

She plied me with other flattering speeches, and bade me recite a few lines, only to make me judge for myself of my talent for acting. When she had heard me, it was quite another thing. She praised me up to the skies, and extolled me above all the actresses in Madrid. After that it would have been inexcusable of me to doubt my own merit. Arsenia was impeached and convicted of jealousy and insincerity, and I had to admit that I was admirably qualified for the stage. Two actors, who happened to drop in at that moment, and before whom Phenicia made me repeat the verses I had already recited, fell into a sort of rapture, from which they roused themselves only to overwhelm me with praise. Seriously, had each of the three been trying who should praise me most highly, they could not have used more hyperbolical language. My modesty was not proof against so many laudations; I began to think that I had some merit; and thus my thoughts were turned to the stage.

“Well then, my dear,” I said to Phenicia, “it is settled. I will follow your advice, and enter your company, if they will accept me.” At these words, my friend, transported with joy, clasped me in her arms, and her two comrades seemed no less delighted to hear these sentiments. It was settled that next day I should go to the theatre in the forenoon and exhibit before the whole company the same

sample of my talent which I had just displayed. If a good opinion of me had been formed in Phenicia's room, the actors at the theatre were still more complimentary in their judgment after I had uttered only a score of lines in their presence. They received me into their company with the utmost willingness. After this I was only taken up with my first appearance. To make it as brilliant as possible I employed all the money remaining from the sale of my ring; and if I had not enough to dress myself splendidly, at least I had the skill to make up for magnificence by excellent taste.

At length I appeared on the stage for the first time. What clapping of hands! What praise! I am modest, my friend, when I merely tell you that I enchanted the audience. You should have heard the noise I made in Seville, to believe it. I was the talk of the whole town, which for three weeks came to the theatre in crowds, so that the company by this novelty regained the favour of the public, which was beginning to desert it. Thus I made my first appearance in a manner which delighted everybody. Now, to begin in such a way, was as though I had advertised that I was open to an offer of the highest and last bidder. Twenty gentlemen of all ages and conditions vied with each other in offering me their protection. Had I followed my inclination, I

should have chosen the youngest and handsomest, but we actresses must only consult interest and ambition, when a settlement has to be considered. It is a law of the theatrical profession. That was why Don Ambrosio de Nisana,¹ a man already old and ugly, but rich, generous, and one of the most powerful noblemen in Andalusia, had the preference. It is true I made him pay a good price. He took a fine house for me, furnished it splendidly, gave me a first-rate cook, two footmen, a lady's-maid, and a thousand ducats a month for my personal expenses. To this he added rich dresses, with a fair quantity of jewels. Arsenia herself had never lived in a more brilliant style. What a change of fortune! My brain could not stand it. I suddenly seemed to myself to be another person. I no longer wonder that there are girls who forget in a little time the wretchedness and misery from which the whim of some nobleman has rescued them. I will make a candid confession to you. The applause of the public, the flattering speeches I heard on all sides, and Don Ambrosio's passion, inspired me with a vanity which became inordinate. I looked on my talent as a patent of nobility. I assumed the airs of a woman of rank, and becoming as chary of my tender looks as I had hitherto been lavish of them, I

¹ *Nisana*, says Llorente, is the Spanish for "ill-shaped." I have not been able to find this word in any dictionary.

resolved to bestow my glances only on dukes, counts, and marquises.

My lord of Nisana took supper with me every evening, with a few of his friends. On my part I took care to invite the most amusing of our actresses, and we spent the greater part of the night in laughing and drinking. Such a pleasant life suited me very well, but it only lasted six months. Men of rank are liable to change; otherwise they would be too delightful. Don Ambrosio left me for a young creature from Grenada, who had just come to Seville, was not without charms, and had the talent of finding a market for them. Nevertheless I was only twenty-four hours in grief. I chose in his place a gentleman of two-and-twenty, Don Lewis of Alcacer,¹ to whom few Spaniards could be compared for personal attractions.

You will doubtless ask me, and you are quite right to do so, why I selected such a young lord for my lover, when experience had taught me the danger of being intimate with such gallants. But, besides that Don Lewis had neither father nor mother, and was already in possession of his property, you must know that such an intimacy is only dangerous for girls in a servile condition, or for unfortunate adventures. Ladies of our profession are privileged persons; we are not at all responsible for

¹ *Alcacer* is the Spanish for "green corn"; an allusion to the youth of Don Lewis.

the effects produced by our charms; so much the worse for the families whose heirs we fleece.

Alcacer and I grew so closely attached to one another that I think no passion ever equalled that which consumed us both. We loved each other so madly that one might have thought a spell had been cast over us. Those who knew of our intimacy believed us to be the happiest lovers in the world; and we were perhaps the most miserable. Don Lewis had a very charming countenance, but he was at the same time so jealous that he was perpetually offending me by unjust suspicions. It was of no use to try and humour his failing, and put such constraint upon myself as not to dare to look at a man; his suspicious temper, ingenious in discovering crimes in me, made my circumspection useless. If I was on the stage I seemed to him, when acting, to be casting amorous glances on some young gentleman or other; and then he overwhelmed me with reproaches. In a word, our most tender conversations were always disturbed by quarrels. It was impossible to endure this any longer; we both lost patience, and we broke in a friendly manner. Will you believe that the last day of our intimacy was the most delightful to us? Both equally wearied of the troubles we had undergone, we displayed the utmost joy at our parting. We were like two wretched

captives recovering their freedom after a harsh slavery.

Since that adventure I have been constantly on my guard against love. I want no more an affection which disturbs my peace. It does not become us to sigh like other people. We, who hold up a passion to ridicule before the public, should not feel it in private.

About this time I gave some employment to Fame. She spread it about that I was an inimitable actress. On the faith of this goddess the comedians of Grenada wrote and offered me an engagement in their company; and, as a proof that the proposal was not one to be scorned, they sent me an account of their daily expenditure and of their subscriptions, from which it seemed that the change would be to my advantage. So I accepted, though I was really sorry to bid farewell to Phenicia and Dorothea, whom I loved as much as one woman can love others. I left the first in Seville, engaged in melting the plate of a little goldsmith, who out of vanity wanted to have an actress for his mistress. I forgot to tell you that when I went on the stage I took a fancy to change the name of Laura to that of Estella, and that I adopted this latter name to come to Grenada.

My first appearance here was no less successful than at Seville, and I was soon surrounded by admirers. But, not meaning to

favour anyone except on good grounds, I behaved to them with so much reserve as to throw dust in their eyes. However, fearing to slip between two stools by a conduct which led to nothing, and which was not natural to me, I was about to listen to a young judge of the court of accounts,¹ of plebeian descent, but who assumed the man of rank by virtue of his office, his sumptuous table, and his equipage, when I saw the Marquis of Marialva for the first time. This Portuguese nobleman, travelling in Spain for his pleasure, and passing through Grenada, stopped here, and came to the play. I was not acting that night. He looked very closely at the actresses on the stage, and found one to his taste. He made her acquaintance on the very next day, and was on the point of entering on an engagement with her, when I appeared on the scene. My fascinations and my simpering made him veer about all of a sudden, like a weathercock, and henceforth my Portuguese attached himself to me only. To confess the truth, as I was not ignorant that my fellow-actress had pleased his lordship, I spared no pains to deprive her of her conquest,

¹ The original gives the Spanish word *oydor*, which appears to have been a post of some standing. The *Relation d'un Voyage en Espagne*, Paris, 1664, says, "It seems to me that it requires four years' study to take the degree of a bachelor . . . and a man must have at least such a degree to become a barrister; a barrister is sometimes appointed *Alcalde*, and afterwards an *Oydor*; but then he must be very clever."

and I had the good fortune to succeed. I know very well that she owes me a grudge for it, but I cannot help that. She ought to remember that such conduct is so natural with women that our dearest friends make no scruples about it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RECEPTION OF GIL BLAS AMONG THE ACTORS
OF GRENADA, AND HOW HE MET AN OLD
ACQUAINTANCE BEHIND THE SCENES.

As Laura was finishing her story, one of her neighbours, an old actress, came to take her to the theatre. This venerable stage heroine might have been a proper personage to play the goddess Cotytto.¹ My sister did not fail to introduce me to this superannuated dame, and a profusion of compliments was bandied about on both sides.

I left them together, telling the bursar's relict that I should meet her again at the theatre as soon as I had ordered my baggage to be taken to the Marquis of Marialva's, to

¹ Cotytto, the Thrasian goddess of immodesty, was worshipped at Athens with nocturnal rites.

whose residence she directed me. I went first to the room I had hired, whence, after having settled with the landlady, I betook myself, with a man carrying my portmanteau, to a large furnished house, where my new master lived. At the door I met his steward, who asked me if I were not Mistress Estella's brother. I replied in the affirmative. "Then you are welcome, worthy sir," he said. The Marquis of Marialva, whose steward I have the honour to be, has commanded me to receive you properly. A room has been made ready for you; if you please I will show you the way to it, that you may know where to go." He took me to the top of the house, and thrust me into a room so small that a rather narrow bed, a wardrobe, and two chairs quite filled it. That was my apartment. "You will not have much elbow room here," said my guide; "but I promise, by way of compensation, that when you get to Lisbon you shall be magnificently lodged." I locked my portmanteau in the wardrobe, the key of which I took away, and asked at what time supper would be ready. The steward replied that the Portuguese nobleman kept no table at home, but allowed each servant a certain sum every month for board-wages. I made several other inquiries, and learned that the Marquis' servants were a happy set of idle fellows. After a short conversation, I left the steward to return to Laura,

agreeably occupied in forming forecasts of my new position.

As soon as I had arrived at the door of the theatre, and said that I was Estella's brother, I was immediately admitted. You should have seen the guards hasten to make way for me, as though I had been one of the most important nobleman in Grenada.¹ All the supernumeraries, door-keepers, and check-takers whom I met in my progress made me their very best bows. But I would I were able to describe to the reader the serious reception which, in the true spirit of comedy, was given to me in the green room, where I found the company dressed and ready to begin. The actors and actresses, to whom Laura introduced me, rushed upon me; the men overwhelming me with embraces, and the women, in their turn, applying their painted faces to mine, and covering it with red and white. No one wishing to be the last to pay me a compliment, they all began to speak at once. I could not answer them all, but my sister came to my aid, and her practised tongue left me in debt to none of them.

¹ Ticknor, in the *History of Spanish Literature*, Second Period, ch. xxvi., says:—"It was deemed a distinction to have free access to the theatre (in Spain); and persons who cared little about the price of a ticket struggled hard to obtain it. Those who paid at all paid twice—at the outer door, where the manager sometimes collected his claims in person, and at the inner one, where an ecclesiastic collected what belonged to the hospitals, under the gentler name of alms."

I did not get off with the embraces of the actors and actresses only; I had to endure the civilities of the scene-painter, the band, the prompter, the candle-snuffer and under-candle-snuffer, and, in short, of all the understrappers of the theatre, who, on the report of my arrival, came running to look at me. One would have thought that all these people were foundlings, who never before had seen a brother.

Meanwhile the performance began. Then several noblemen who were behind the scenes ran to get a place to listen to the piece; whilst I, as if I belonged to the house, went on talking with those of the actors who were not on the stage, and amongst whom there was one they called Melchior. The name struck me. I looked attentively at the individual who was so called, and it seemed to me that I had seen him somewhere. At last I remembered him, and recognised Melchior Zapata, the poor strolling-player who has been described in the first volume of my story, as soaking his crusts of bread in a spring.¹

I at once took him aside, and said to him—
“I am much mistaken if you are not the identical Melchior with whom I had the honour of breakfasting one day by the margin of a clear spring, between Valladolid and Segovia. I was in the company of a journeyman barber. We had a few provisions which we clubbed with

¹ See Vol. I. Book ii. chap. 8.

yours, and we all three made a modest meal, seasoned with a thousand pleasant remarks." Zapata pondered for a few moments, and then replied: "You speak of a matter which I have no difficulty in recalling. At that time I was returning to Zamora, after having made my appearance in Madrid; I even recollect that I was very badly off." "I remember that too," I replied, "by the token that you wore a doublet lined with play-bills. Neither have I forgotten that you complained of having too virtuous a wife." "O! I no longer complain of that now," said Zapata, hastily. "Egad! the wench is quite cured of that; and therefore my doublet is better lined."

I was about to congratulate him on his wife having become a sensible woman, when he was obliged to leave me, to appear on the stage. Curious to know his wife, I went up to an actor and begged him to point her out to me. He did so, saying at the same time: "There she is; it is Narcissa, the prettiest of our ladies except your sister." I concluded that this must be the actress in whose favour the Marquis of Marialva had declared, before he had seen Estella, and my surmise was but too true. When the play was over I escorted Laura to her lodging, where I saw, on our arrival, several cooks preparing a grand entertainment. "You can sup with us," she said to me. "I shall do nothing of the kind," I

replied, "the Marquis will perhaps be pleased to be alone with you." "O! not at all," she rejoined, "he is coming with two of his own friends and one of our gentlemen;—you can make a sixth if you like. You know that at an actress's house secretaries have the privilege of sitting down at table with their masters." "True," said I; "but it would be rather too early to place myself on the same footing as these favourite secretaries. I must first of all perform some confidential mission, to deserve that honourable privilege." I then left Laura's and went back to my inn, where I meant to go every day, since my master had no regular establishment.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MAN WITH WHOM GIL
BLAS SUPPED THAT EVENING, AND OF WHAT
WENT ON BETWEEN THEM.

IN the room I observed an old man, seemingly a monk, clad in coarse, grey cloth, who was taking his solitary supper in a corner. Out of curiosity I sat down opposite to him, and saluted him very courteously. He showed himself no less polite than I was. My slender portion was brought, and I began to despatch

it with a good appetite. While I was eating without saying a word, I looked at him frequently, and always found his eyes fixed on me. Tired of his obstinate attention in looking at me I addressed him thus—"Father, can we ever by chance have met anywhere but here? You look at me as if I were not an entire stranger to you."

He replied gravely—"If I fix my eyes on you, it is only in wonder at the prodigious variety of adventures recorded in the features of your countenance." "It seems," said I, jestingly, "that your reverence is given to metoposcopy?"¹ "I may boast of being master of that art," replied the monk, "and of having made predictions which events have not belied. I am also skilled in chiromancy;² and I will venture to say that my predictions are infallible after I have inspected the hand and the face, and have compared the two."

Though this old man had all the appearance of being very intelligent, I thought him so foolish that I could not help laughing in his face. Instead of being offended at my want of politeness, he only smiled, and, after glancing round the hall, and perceiving that no one was listening to us, he continued as follows—"I

¹ Metoposcopy, the art which pretends to divine the character of a person by inspecting his countenance.

² Chiromancy pretends to do the same by studying the lines of the hand.

am not surprised at finding you so prejudiced against two sciences which in these days are considered trivial; the long and painful study which they demand discourages all learned men, who relinquish them, and run them down out of spite at having been unable to acquire them. For my part, I am not repelled by the obscurity in which they are involved, any more than by the difficulties continually arising in the pursuit of the secrets of chemistry, and in the marvellous art of the transmutation of metals into gold."

"But," he resumed, "I do not consider that I am addressing a young gentleman to whom my words must seem indeed like idle fancies. A specimen of my skill will induce you, better than anything I could say, to judge of me more favourably." After talking in this manner he drew from his pocket a phial, full of a red liquor. Then he said—"Here is an elixir which I have distilled this morning in an alembic from the juices of certain plants; for I have spent almost all my life, like Democritus, in discovering the properties of simples and minerals. You shall see its virtue put to the proof. The wine which we are drinking at our supper is very wretched; but it shall become excellent." He then put two drops of his elixir into my bottle, which made my wine more delicious than the best drunk in Spain.

The marvellous strikes the imagination; and

when that is once gained over we no longer employ our judgment. Delighted with such a glorious secret, and persuaded that a man must be something more than a demon to have discovered it, I cried in a transport of admiration, "Father, prithee, pardon me for taking you at first for an old madman. I do you justice now; I require to see no more to be assured that, if you would, you could immediately turn a bar of iron into an ingot of gold. How happy should I be were I master of this admirable science!" "Heaven preserve you from ever acquiring it!" the old man interrupted, with a deep sigh. "My son, you do not know what you wish. Instead of envying me, rather pity me for having taken so much trouble to make myself unhappy. I am always in unrest; I am afraid of being discovered, and that perpetual imprisonment should be the reward of all my labours. As I dread this, I lead a wandering life, disguised sometimes as a priest or a monk, and sometimes as a gentleman or a peasant. Is it then an advantage to know how to make gold at such a price? And is not wealth a real torment for those who do not enjoy it in peace?"

"These words seem to me very rational," I said to the philosopher. "There is nothing like a quiet life. You disgust me with the philosopher's stone. I shall be satisfied if you will let me know what will happen to me."

“Willingly, my child,” he replied. “I have already scanned your features; now let me see your hand.” I held it out to him with a confidence which will do me little credit in the opinion of some readers, who in my situation might have done the same. He examined it very closely, and then said with enthusiasm, “Ah, how many transitions from grief to joy, and from joy to grief! What a strange succession of misfortunes and prosperities! But you have already experienced a large share of these vicissitudes of fortune. There are few misfortunes left for you to endure; and then a great lord will procure you an eligible fate, not subject to change.”

After having assured me that I might rely on this prediction, he bade me farewell, and quitted the inn, where he left me much engrossed with the matters I had just heard. There could be no doubt that the Marquis of Marialva was the nobleman in question, and, therefore, nothing seemed more likely than the fulfilment of the prediction. But even if I had not seen the slightest probability of it, that would not have prevented me from entirely believing in the pretended monk; such a command over my mind had he obtained by his elixir. I resolved, in order to promote on my own part the good fortune which was foretold me, to attach myself to the Marquis more than I had done to any of my masters. Having

formed this resolution, I returned home in better spirits than I can express. Never did a woman leave a fortune-teller with more satisfaction.

CHAPTER X.

THE MARQUIS OF MARIALVA GIVES A COMMISSION TO GIL BLAS, AND HOW THIS FAITHFUL SECRETARY ACQUITS HIMSELF OF IT.

THE Marquis had not yet returned from the actress's; and in his rooms I found his servants playing primero,¹ whilst awaiting his return. I made their acquaintance, and we laughed and amused ourselves until two o'clock in the morning, when our master arrived. He was somewhat surprised at seeing me, and said, with a kindness of manner which made me conclude that he came home well pleased with his evening's entertainment: "How is this, Gil Blas? Are you not gone to bed yet?" I replied that I wished to know whether he had any commands for me. "I may, perhaps, have a commission for you to-morrow morning," he said, "but it will then be time enough to acquaint you with my wishes. Go to bed, and remember that I dispense with your

¹ See Vol. ii., Bk. v., ch. i., page 184.

attendance in the evening; I then only want my valets."

After this hint, which pleased me in the main, inasmuch as it spared me a duty which sometimes I should have felt irksome, I left the Marquis in his room, and retiring to my garret, went to bed. But being unable to sleep, it came into my head to follow the advice which Pythagoras gives us, of recalling at night what we have done during the day, in order to take credit for our good deeds, and to blame ourselves for our bad ones.

My conscience was not clear enough to be satisfied with my conduct. For instance, I reproached myself for having seconded Laura's imposture. It was of no use telling myself that I could not, with any decency, have given the lie to a girl who had no object in view but to do me a kindness, and that I had been in some sort compelled to become an accomplice in her deception. Dissatisfied with this excuse, I rejoined that I ought not, then, to have carried things farther, and that I must have no little effrontery to remain with a nobleman whose confidence I was repaying so ill. At last, after a severe examination, I ended by agreeing with myself that, if I was not a rogue, I was very little short of it.

Passing from this to the consequences, I represented to myself that I was playing a bold game in deceiving a man of rank, who, as a

punishment for my sins, might perhaps soon detect the imposture. Such a judicious reflection filled my mind with a certain terror, which was soon dissipated by considerations of pleasure and interest. Besides, the prophecy of the man with the elixir would have sufficed to reassure me, so I gave myself up to the most agreeable fancies. I began arithmetical calculations, casting up what sum my wages would amount to in ten years. To this I added the gratuities which I should receive from my master; and estimating them in accordance with his liberal disposition, or rather with my desires, my imagination became so fantastical, if I may say so, that I set no bounds to my fortune. So much wealth gradually made me drowsy, and I fell asleep building castles in the air.¹

I rose next morning about eight o'clock to receive my patron's orders; but as I was opening my door to go out, I was astonished to see him appear before me, in his dressing-gown and night-cap. He was quite alone. "Gil Blas," he said, "last night, when I left your sister, I promised to call on her this morning; but a matter of importance prevents me from keeping my word. Go and assure her from me that I am much annoyed by this disappointment, and that I shall certainly sup with

¹ *Des châteaux en Espagne*, in the original; an expression the more suitable, as the action takes place in Spain.

her this evening. That is not all," he added, putting a purse into my hands, and a little shagreen case set with precious stones, "take her my portrait, and keep this purse, in which you will find fifty pistoles, as a mark of the friendship I already feel for you." I took the portrait in one hand, and in the other the purse, which I deserved so little. I immediately hastened to Laura's house, saying to myself in the excess of my joy. "Well! the prophecy is visibly becoming accomplished. What a happiness it is to be the brother of such a handsome and accommodating girl! It is a pity that there is less honour than profit and pleasure in all this."

Laura, unlike most ladies of her profession, was accustomed to rise early. I surprised her at her toilette, at which, while waiting for her Portuguese, she was enhancing her natural beauty with all the adventitious charms that the art of coquetry could bestow. "Lovely Estella," I said as I entered, "loadstone of strangers, I may now sit down at table with my master, since he has honoured me with a commission which gives me that privilege, and which I am here to discharge. He cannot have the pleasure of waiting on you this morning as he intended, but to comfort you he will sup with you to-night; and he sends you his portrait, which to me seems to contain still greater comfort."

I then put the case into her hands; and the sparkling diamonds with which it was adorned vastly delighted her. She opened it, and after looking at the picture for form's sake, shut it, and glanced again at the jewels. She dwelt on their beauty, and said to me, with a smile—"Such copies as this theatrical ladies prefer to the originals."

I then told her that the generous Portuguese, when he entrusted me with the portrait, had made me a present of a purse of fifty pistoles. "I congratulate you," she said; "this nobleman begins where it is even uncommon for others to end." "It is to you, my charmer," I replied, "that this present is owing; the Marquis gave it me solely because I was your brother." "I wish," she rejoined, "that he would give you as much every day. I cannot tell you how dear you are to me. From the first moment I saw you I was drawn to you by so close a tie that time has not been able to tear it asunder. When I lost you in Madrid I did not despair of finding you again; and yesterday, when I beheld you once more, I received you as a man who infallibly was to come back to me. In a word, my dear friend, Heaven has destined us for each other. You shall be my husband, but we must first get plenty of money. Prudence requires that we should begin with that. I yet must have three or four intrigues to put you in easy circumstances."

I thanked her politely for the trouble she was good enough to take on my behalf, and we got gradually in a conversation which lasted until noon. Then I withdrew, to give my master an account of the manner in which his present had been received. Though Laura had given me no instructions on that subject, I was not remiss in composing a fine compliment as I went along, which I intended to repeat in her name; but this was a waste of genius, for when I got home I was told that the Marquis had just gone out, and it was fated that I should never set eyes on him again, as will be perceived on reading the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEWS WHICH GIL BLAS HEARD, AND WHICH
WAS A THUNDERBOLT FOR HIM.

I WENT to my inn, where I met two men whose conversation pleased me. I dined and remained at table with them until it was time to go to the theatre, when we separated. They went about their business, and I took the road to the play-house. By the way, it may be stated that I had every reason to be in high spirits. The conversation which I had just

had with these gentlemen had been very merry; fortune smiled most pleasantly on me, and yet for all that I could not help giving way to sadness. After that, let me be told that we have no presentiment of the misfortunes that menace us!

As I was entering the green-room, Melchior Zapata came up to me, and told me in a low voice to follow him. He took me into a private place and spoke to me as follows—"Señor, I think it my duty to communicate to you an important piece of news. You know that the Marquis of Marialva had at first taken a fancy to Narcissa, my wife; he had indeed already fixed a day to come and have a cut of my rib, when that artful Estella found means to break the bargain and lure this Portuguese nobleman to herself. Judge whether an actress loses a fair prey without vexation. My wife took it to heart; there was nothing she was not capable of doing to avenge herself; and unfortunately for you she has found a capital opportunity. Yesterday, if you recollect, all our supernumeraries crowded to see you; the deputy-candlesnuffer told several of the company that he remembered you perfectly, and that you might be anything but Estella's brother.

"This report," added Melchior, "came to-day to Narcissa's ears; she lost no time in questioning the originator of it, who confirmed it. He says that he knew you as Arsenia's

servant, at the same time that Estella, under the name of Laura, was in her service in Madrid. My wife, delighted with this discovery, means to communicate it to the Marquis of Marialva, who is coming to the play to-night. Take your measures accordingly. If you are not really Estella's brother, I would advise you as a friend, and for old acquaintance's sake, to provide for your safety. Narcissa, who is satisfied with only one victim, has permitted me to warn you, so as to prevent by a speedy flight some untoward accident."

It would have been superfluous to say more. I thanked the actor for his warning, and he saw plainly, from my terrified manner, that I was not the man to give the lie to the deputy-candlesnuffer. Indeed, I was in no humour to carry effrontery to such pitch; I was not even tempted to go and bid farewell to Laura, lest she should induce me to brazen it out. I could easily conceive that she was a good enough actress to get out of such a scrape, but I only saw an inevitable chastisement in store for myself, and I was not sufficiently in love to brave this. I thought of nothing except escaping with my household gods, I mean my clothes. I disappeared from the theatre in a twinkling, and in less than no time I had my portmanteau taken away and safely lodged with a muleteer, who was to leave at three o'clock next morning for Toledo. I could have wished

myself already at the Count of Polan's, whose house seemed to be the only sure refuge for me. But I was not there yet; and I could not think without anxiety of the time that had still to be passed in a town, where I feared they would look for me that very night.

For all this I did not fail to eat my supper at my inn, though I was as much disturbed as a debtor who knows that there are alguazils at his heels. My stomach did not very well digest, I fancy, what I ate that night. The wretched sport of fear, I scanned everybody who came into the room; and if unfortunately anyone of evil aspect entered, as is not unusual in places of that sort, I trembled with terror. After having eaten my supper in constant alarm, I rose from the table, and returned to the muleteer's house, where I threw myself on some clean straw and lay till the hour of our departure.

My patience was severely exercised all this time, and a thousand unpleasant thoughts assailed me. If sometimes I dozed off, I saw the enraged Marquis disfiguring with blows Laura's lovely face, and smashing everything in her house; or I heard him giving directions to his servants to beat me to death. Thereupon I awoke with a start, and the waking, which is usually so pleasant after a frightful dream, was still harder to bear than the dream itself.

Fortunately, the muleteer delivered me from

such great torments by coming to tell me that the mules were ready. I was instantly on my feet, and I left, thank Heaven, radically cured of Laura and chiromancy. The further we got from Grenada, the more my mind regained its tranquillity. I began to chat with the muleteer; I laughed at several amusing stories which he told me, and gradually entirely lost my terror. I slept soundly at Ubeda, where we rested the first night; and on the fourth day we reached Toledo. My first care was to discover the Count of Polan's residence, whither I went, fully persuaded that he would never allow me to lodge elsewhere. But I reckoned without my host. There was none at home but the lodge-keeper, and he told me that his master had gone the day before to the castle of Leyva, on having received tidings of Seraphina's dangerous illness.

I had not anticipated the count's absence. It damped the joy I felt in being at Toledo, and led me to form another resolution. Finding myself so near Madrid, I resolved to go there. I reflected that I might get on at court, where superior intelligence, as I had heard, was not absolutely requisite for success. On the very next day I availed myself of a returning conveyance to take me to the Spanish capital. Fortune led me thither that I might play grander parts than any I had hitherto performed.

CHAPTER XII.

GIL BLAS GOES TO LODGE AT A BOARDING-HOUSE.
HE MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF CAPTAIN
CHINCHILLA. THE CHARACTER OF THIS OFFI-
CER, AND WHAT HAD BROUGHT HIM TO MADRID.

As soon as I arrived in Madrid, I took up my quarters in a boarding-house, where dwelt, among other persons, an old captain, who had come from the furthest part of New Castile to solicit from the court a pension, which he fancied he had only too well deserved. His name was Don Hannibal de Chinchilla. The first time I saw him he astonished me greatly. He was a man of sixty, of a gigantic stature, and extremely thin. He wore a thick moustache, which twirled up, meandering on both sides of his face as high as his temples. He not only lacked an arm and a leg, but the vacancy of one eye was covered by a large patch of green silk, whilst his face was scarred in various places. With these exceptions he was like the ordinary run of men. Moreover, he did not lack intelligence, and still less gravity. He was very scrupulous in his principles, and especially piqued himself on his delicacy in points of honour.

After two or three conversations with him,

he honoured me with his confidence, and I soon knew his whole personal history. He told me on what occasion he had left an eye at Naples, an arm in Lombardy, and a leg in the Low Countries. What I most admired in his narratives of battles and sieges was, that he showed no trace of boasting, never saying a word in his own praise; though I could readily have pardoned him for bragging of the half that remained of him, by way of indemnifying himself for the loss of the other half. Officers who come back from the wars safe and sound are not always so modest.

But he told me that what concerned him most was his having spent a considerable fortune in his campaigns, so that he had no other income left than a hundred ducats a year; which hardly sufficed to keep up his moustaches, to pay his rent, and to get his petitions written. "For, in point of fact, worthy sir," he added, shrugging his shoulders, "I present one every day, thank Heaven, without the slightest attention being paid to them. You would think that it was even betting between the prime minister and myself, which of us two should be tired first, I of presenting memorials, or he of receiving them. I have also the honour to present them frequently to the king; but the master is no better than his man;¹ and mean-

¹ In the original *le curé ne chante pas mieux que son vicaire*, the rector does not sing better than his curate.

while my castle of Chinchilla is falling to ruins for want of repairs."

"Never despair," I said to the captain; "you know that the favours of the court generally have to be waited for some time; perhaps you are on the eve of seeing your pains and labours repaid with interest." "I ought not to flatter myself with that hope," replied Hannibal. "Not three days ago I spoke to one of the minister's secretaries; and if I may believe him, I have great need to keep up my spirits." "What did he say to you then?" I asked; "did he not think that the state in which you are deserves a reward?" "You shall judge for yourself," answered Chinchilla. "This secretary told me very plainly: 'My honest friend, do not boast so much of your zeal and fidelity; you only did your duty by exposing yourself to danger for your country. The mere glory attached to deeds of daring sufficiently rewards them, and ought to satisfy a Spaniard above all men. You, therefore, better undeceive yourself if you consider the recompense which you solicit as a debt. Should it be granted to you, you will owe that favour exclusively to the kindness of the king, who condescends to think himself indebted to those of his subjects who have served the State well.' Thus you see," continued the captain, "that I am still in their debt, and that I bid fair to return as I came."

One is interested by the sight of a brave man in adversity. I exhorted him to persevere; I offered to write out his petitions gratuitously; I even went so far as to offer him my purse, and begged him to take whatever money he wanted. But he was not one of those men who never wait for a second invitation in such a case; on the contrary, he showed himself very delicate on this point, and thanked me proudly for my kind intention. He told me afterwards that, in order to be dependent on no one, he had gradually accustomed himself to live so frugally that the smallest amount of food was sufficient to keep him alive; and this was but too true. He ate nothing but shallots and onions, and was consequently but skin and bone. That he might have no witnesses of his wretched meals, he generally locked himself up in his room to eat them. However, I prevailed on him by my entreaties that we should dine and sup together; and undermining his pride by indirect artifices of compassion, I ordered much more meat and wine than I myself could consume. I then urged him to eat and drink. At first he stood upon ceremony, but at length he yielded to my entreaties; and after a time, gradually becoming bolder, he helped me of his own accord to clear the dish and empty the bottle.

When he had drunk four or five glasses and reconciled his stomach to good food, he said

with an air of gaiety: "Upon my word, Señor Gil Blas, you have very winning ways with you; you make me do whatever you please. Your manners are very captivating, and relieve me even from the fear of presuming on your kindly disposition." The captain, by that time, seemed so well cured of his bashfulness that if I had cared to seize the opportunity of urging him again to accept my purse, I believe he would not have refused it. I did not put him to the proof; I was content with having him dine with me, and with taking the trouble, not only to write out his petitions, but even with helping him in composing them. By dint of copying out sermons I had learned how to turn a phrase, and had become somewhat of an author. The old officer, on his side, piqued himself on knowing how to write; so that by dint of vying with each other we produced scraps of eloquence worthy of the most celebrated professors of Salamanca. But it was in vain we exhausted our minds in the attempt to scatter flowers of rhetoric over these petitions; it was, so to speak, sowing on sand. Whatever devices we might invent to enhance the services of Don Hannibal, the court paid no attention to them, which did not induce the old invalid to paint in glowing colours the fortune of officers who ruin themselves in the service. In his bad humour he cursed the planet under which he was born,

and sent Naples, Lombardy, and the Low Countries to the deuce.

To add to his mortification, it happened one day that, to his very face, a poet, introduced by the Duke of Alva, having recited before the king a sonnet on the birth of an infanta, was rewarded with a pension of five hundred ducats. I think the maimed captain would have gone mad on this occasion, if I had not taken some pains to calm his mind. "What is the matter with you?" I asked, seeing him quite beside himself. "There is nothing in that which ought to shock you. Have not poets, time out of mind, had the privilege of laying princes under contribution to their muse? There is no crowned head but allows a pension to some of these gentlemen. And between ourselves, pensions of this sort, being rarely ignored in after ages, perpetuate the liberality of kings, whilst they bestow others which are often a dead loss to their reputation. How many rewards did Augustus grant, how many pensions did he confer of which we have not the smallest knowledge? But the remotest posterity will know, as we know, that Virgil received from the bounty of this emperor more than two hundred thousand crowns."

Notwithstanding all that I could say to Don Hannibal, the reward of the sonnet stuck like lead on his stomach; and as he could not digest it he resolved to throw everything over.

But wishing, as his last stake, to present one more petition to the Duke of Lerma,¹ we went together for this purpose to the prime minister's. There we met a young man, who, after saluting the captain, said to him in a tone of affection—"My dear old master, is it you whom I behold? What business brings you to his Excellency? If you require any one who has influence, do not spare me; I offer you my services." "How is this, Pedrillo?" answered the captain: "to hear you talk one would think you occupied some important post in this house." "At least," replied the young man, "I have influence enough to be of use to a worthy *hidalgo*² like you." "It is so," resumed the captain with a smile, "I place myself under your protection." "You shall have it," answered Pedrillo. "Only tell me what is your business, and I promise to get you something from the prime minister.

We had no sooner communicated to this very good-natured young man why we came there than he asked where Don Hannibal was living; then assuring us that we should

¹ Don Francis de Roxas de Sandoval is an historical personage of whom mention is made in the following chapters. Philip III., King of Spain, began to reign in 1598, when he was only twenty-one years old, and died in 1621. From 1598 until 1618, Sandoval, whom the king had made a grandee and Duke of Lerma, was his favourite and prime minister.

² *Hidalgo* is the Spanish for "a well-born gentleman;" literally, "son of some one."

hear from him on the following day, he disappeared, without telling us what he meant to do, or so much as informing us if he belonged to the Duke of Lerma's household. I was curious to know who this Pedrillo was, who seemed so shrewd. "He is a young fellow," said the captain to me, "who was in my service some years ago, but who, seeing me in poverty, left me to find a better place. I have no quarrel with him for that; it is very natural to wish to change for the better. The rascal is not without intelligence, and as good at intriguing as a whole company of imps. But in spite of all his knowledge of the world, I do not count much on the zeal he has just expressed on my behalf." "Perhaps," said I, "he may be of some use to you. If he belongs, for instance, to one of the duke's principal officers, he might render you a service. You know that everything is done among the great by intrigue and interest. They have favourite attendants who govern them, and these again are governed by their menials."

Next morning Pedrillo made his appearance at our lodging. "Gentlemen," he said, "if I did not explain myself yesterday as to my means of helping Captain Chinchilla, it was because we were not in a place where I could speak to you on such a confidential matter. Moreover, I was glad to be able to examine the ground before opening my mind to you. You

must know then that I am the confidential servant of Don Rodrigo de Calderon,¹ first secretary of the Duke of Lerma. My master, who is very fond of the ladies, goes almost every evening to take supper with a nightingale from Aragon, whom he keeps in a cage in the Court quarter. She is a very pretty young girl from Albarazin, intelligent, and a charming singer; so people call her Señora Sirena. As I take a love-letter to her every morning, I have just seen her. I have proposed to her that she should pass off Don Hannibal as her uncle, and thus get her lover to take the captain under his protection. She is willing to undertake this business; for besides the little advantage which she foresees in it for herself, she will be delighted to be thought the niece of a military gentleman."

Señor de Chinchilla made a wry face at this proposal. He showed some reluctance at being an accomplice in such a deception, and still more in allowing an adventuress to dishonour his family by saying that she belonged to it. It was not only on his own account that he shrunk from it: he saw therein, so to speak, a kind of retrospective ignominy for his ancestors. This delicacy appeared unseasonable to Pedrillo, who was offended at it. "Are you joking," he cried, "to take it in such a light? That is

¹ Lesage writes "Calderone," but the first secretary's name was really Calderon.

just the way with you, you country aristocrats, with your ridiculous vanity. Worthy sir," he continued, addressing himself to me, "do you not wonder at the captain's scruples? By Heaven! it is not at Court that a man should stand on such punctilios! There fortune is never allowed to escape, whatever ugly shape it may assume!"

I approved Pedrillo's words, and we both lectured the captain so successfully that we made him become Sirena's uncle in spite of himself. When we had thus got the better of his pride, which was no easy matter, the three of us set to work on a new petition for the minister, which was revised, enlarged, and corrected. Then I wrote it out neatly, and Pedrillo carried it to the Aragonian lady, who put it that very evening into the hands of Don Rodrigo, to whom she spoke in such a manner that the secretary, believing her to be really the captain's niece, promised to bestir himself on his behalf. A few days afterwards we saw the effects of our stratagem; Pedrillo came triumphantly to our house. "Good news," said he to Chinchilla, "the king is about to make a distribution of commanderies, places and pensions, in which you will not be forgotten; this is what I am instructed to assure you. But I am commissioned to ask you at the same time what present you intend to make to Sirena. For my part I declare to

you that I expect nothing ; I prefer the pleasure of having contributed to amend my old master's fortune, to all the gold in the world. But this is not the case with our nymph of Albarazin ; she is something of a Jewess when it comes to helping her neighbour ; that is her little fault ; she would take her own father's money, so you may fancy she will not refuse it from a pretended uncle ! ”

“ She has only to mention what she wishes me to do,” replied Don Hannibal ; “ if she wants every year a third of the pension I may obtain, I will pledge my word to give it to her ; and that ought to satisfy her, even though all the revenues of his Catholic Majesty were involved.” “ I would very readily trust to your word,” replied Don Rodrigo's Mercury ; “ I know that it is as good as your bond ; but you have to do with a little creature, naturally distrustful. Besides she will be much better pleased if you give her, once for all, two-thirds beforehand in ready money.” “ Why, where the deuce would she have me get it ? ” the officer quickly broke in ; “ does she think me a lord high-treasurer ? ¹ You cannot have made her acquainted with my situation.” “ Pardon me,” replied Pedrillo ; “ she knows well enough that you are poorer than Job ; after what I have told her she cannot be ignorant of it. But do not trouble yourself ; I am up to

¹ This is printed in the original, in Spanish, *Contador mayor*.

all sorts of expedients. I know a rascally old judge of the court of accounts,¹ who is glad to lend money at ten per cent. You must assign your first year's pension to him, before a notary, with security for a corresponding sum, which you will acknowledge to have received from him, and which you will in fact receive, after the interest has been deducted. As for the security, the lender will be satisfied with your castle of Chinchilla, such as it is: there will be no dispute on that point.

The captain declared his readiness to accept these conditions, if he were so fortunate as to obtain any share in the favours which were to be distributed on the next day. In this he was not disappointed; he received a pension of three hundred pistoles, on a certain commandery. As soon as he had heard this news he gave all the securities required of him, transacted his little affairs, and returned to New Castile with a few pistoles in his pocket.

¹ See ch. vii., page 358, note.

CHAPTER XIII.

GIL BLAS MEETS HIS DEAR FRIEND FABRICIO AT COURT. GREAT JOY ON BOTH SIDES. THEY ADJOURN TOGETHER; AND THE CURIOUS CONVERSATION WHICH THEY HAD.

I HAD acquired a habit of going every morning to the king's palace, where I spent fully two or three hours in looking at the going to and fro of the noblemen, who appeared there without the splendour in which they move elsewhere.

One day as I was walking and strutting through the apartments, making there, like many others, a somewhat foolish figure, I perceived Fabricio, whom I had left at Valladolid in the service of an hospital director. I was astonished to see him conversing familiarly with the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Marquis of Santa-Cruz. These two noblemen, as it seemed to me, were listening to him with pleasure. In addition to this he was dressed as well as any man of rank.

"Can I be mistaken?" I said to myself; "is it really the son of Nunez the barber? Perhaps it may be some young courtier who is very like him." I did not remain long in doubt. The noblemen went away and I accosted Fabricio. He recognised me at once, took me

by the hand, and after leading me through the crowd out of the apartments, he said, embracing me—"My dear Gil Blas, I am delighted to see you again! What are you doing in Madrid! Are you still in service, or have you some place at court? How are you getting on? Tell me all that has happened since your hasty departure from Valladolid." "You are asking me a great many questions at once," I replied, "and we are not in a fit place for telling my adventures." "You are right," he answered, "we shall be better at my lodgings. Come, I will show you the way; it is not far off. I am my own master, have comfortable quarters, very well furnished; and live content, and am happy, since I think myself so."

I accepted the invitation, and followed Fabricio until we stopped before a fine-looking house, where he told me he lived. We crossed a court, having on one side a great flight of steps leading to magnificent apartments; and on the other, a small staircase, dark and narrow,¹ by which we went up to the lodging which he had so much extolled. It consisted of a single room, which my ingenious friend had divided into four, by deal partitions. The first served as an antechamber to the second, where he

¹ M. Llorente maintains seriously that none but a Spaniard could know that in large hotels there are dark and narrow staircases to be used by people of inferior rank; forgetting that this was the case in all noblemen's houses in Paris, about the time Lesage wrote *Gil Blas*.

slept; he made his study of the third, and his kitchen of the fourth. The chamber and antechamber were hung with maps and philosophical theses, and the furniture was in harmony with the hangings. There was a large bed of brocade much the worse for wear; old chairs covered in yellow serge, adorned with a fringe of Grenada silk of the same colour; a table with gilt legs, covered with leather which seemed once to have been red, and was edged by sham gold lace, grown black with time; and an ebony wardrobe, adorned by rudely carved figures. In his study he had a little table in place of a writing-desk, and his library consisted of a few books, with several bundles of papers, arranged on shelves, one above another, along the walls. His kitchen, which was in keeping with the rest, contained some earthenware and other necessary utensils.

Fabricio, after giving me time to survey his rooms, said—"What do you think of my domestic arrangements and of my lodgings? Are you not delighted with them?" "Yes, that I am," I replied with a smile. "You must have been doing a pretty good stroke of business in Madrid to be so nicely dressed. No doubt you have a post of some sort?" "Heaven forbid!" he replied. "My line of business is far above any situation. A man of rank, to whom this house belongs, has given me a room in it, out of which I have made four,

and these I have furnished as you see. I only employ my time with matters which I fancy, and never feel what it is to want." "Explain yourself more explicitly," I interrupted; "you increase the desire I have to know what you are doing." "Well then," he said, "you shall be satisfied; I have become an author, and have set up for a wit; I write verse and prose; I am equal to anything."¹

"You, the favourite of Apollo!" I exclaimed, with a laugh; "I should never have guessed it. I should have been much less surprised to have found you in a quite different character. What charms, then, could you see in a poet's life? It seems to me that those people are despised in polite society, and that their meals are very problematical." "Oh, nonsense!" he cried in his turn; "you are talking of those wretched authors whose works are the butt of booksellers and players. Can one be astonished if such writings are not valued? But good authors, my friend, are on a better footing in the world; and I may say, without vanity, that I am one of them." "I do not doubt it," I said; "you are a young man brimful of intelligence. What you compose cannot be bad; I am only puzzled to know how the rage for writing took you; that seems to me worthy of my curiosity."

¹ The original has *je suis au poil et à la plume*. *Poil*, hair, was considered a sign of virility; hence "courage, resolution."

“Your astonishment is quite justifiable,” rejoined Nunez. “I was so well satisfied with my situation in the house of Señor Manuel Ordonez that I desired no better. But as my genius gradually asserted itself, like that of Plautus, above my menial occupations, I wrote a comedy, and got it played by some actors who were performing at Valladolid. Though it was not worth a fig it had a great success. Hence I concluded that the public was a good milch-cow, easy to be milked. This reflection, and the passion for writing new pieces, weaned me from the hospital. The love of poetry drove from me the love of wealth. I resolved to repair to Madrid, as to the centre of talent, in order to form my taste. I asked for my discharge from the director, who granted it reluctantly; such was his affection for me. ‘Fabricio,’ he said, ‘why do you want to leave me? Can I have unknowingly given you any cause of dissatisfaction?’ ‘No, sir,’ I replied; ‘you are the best of masters, and I am deeply impressed with your kindness; but you know every one must follow his destiny. I feel myself born to immortalise my name by works of genius.’ ‘What folly!’ the good citizen replied. ‘You have already obtained a footing in the hospital; you are of the stuff that stewards are made of, and even directors now and then. You want to desert the solid, in order to employ yourself

with trifles. So much the worse for you, my lad.'

"My master, seeing that it was in vain to oppose my design, paid me my wages, and made me a present of fifty ducats as an acknowledgment of my services. So that with this, and what I had been able to scrape together out of some little commissions which had been intrusted to my disinterestedness, I was in a position, on reaching Madrid, to dress myself decently¹; which I did not fail to do, although the writers of our country hardly pique themselves on their elegant appearance. I soon became acquainted with Lope de Vega Carpio, Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, and other famous authors; but in preference to these great men, I chose for my master a young bachelor from Cordova, the incomparable Don Lewis de Gongora,² the finest genius Spain has ever produced. He will not allow his works to be printed whilst he is alive; and is content to read them to his friends; but what is very remarkable is that nature has gifted him with the rare talent of succeeding in every kind of poetry. He excels chiefly in satirical pieces: that is his strongest point. He is not like Lucilius,³ a

¹ Compare this with the remark Gil Blas makes to Fabricio about the latter being "so nicely dressed." See page 393.

² Gongora y Argote, who died in 1627, was called the Prince of Spanish poets. His works are full of antitheses.

³ Lucilius, a satirical Latin poet.

muddy stream, which carries with it abundance of slime; rather is he like the Tagus, rolling its limpid waves over golden sands."

"It is a fine portrait," I said to Fabricio, "which you draw me of this bachelor, and I do not doubt that a person of such merit has many who envy him." "All authors," he replied, "the good as well as the bad, attack him. Some say he loves bombast, clenches, metaphors, and transpositions. His verses, say others, are as obscure as those which the Salian priests used to chant in their processions, and which nobody understood. There are even some who reproach him for composing sonnets and romances to-day, comedies, ten-lined stanzas and *letrilles*¹ to-morrow, as though he had foolishly undertaken to eclipse the best writers in all styles. But these shafts of jealousy are impotent against a muse which is beloved by the great and by the multitude.

"Under such an able master, then, did I serve my apprenticeship, and I venture to say without vanity, not without results. I have caught his spirit so well that I have already written certain detached pieces which he would be willing to acknowledge. After his example I offer my goods in the mansions of the great, where I am excellently received, and where I

¹ A Spanish word signifying "madrigals, small compliments, and letters in poetry." Father Isla, in his translation of *Gil Blas* into Spanish, uses *villancicos*.

have to deal with people who are not difficult to please. It is true that I have a taking delivery, which does no discredit to my compositions. In short, I am favoured by several noblemen, and I am especially intimate with the Duke of Medina Sidonia, just as Horace was with Mæcenæas. That," said Fabricio, "is how I have been converted into an author, I have no more to tell you ; but it is your turn now, Gil Blas, to relate your exploits."

Then I took up the conversation, and suppressing every insignificant detail, I told him what he desired to know. After this it was necessary to think about dinner. He took out of his ebony cupboard some napkins, bread, the remains of a roast shoulder of mutton, and a bottle of excellent wine, and we sat down to dinner with all the high spirits of two friends meeting after a long separation. "You perceive," he said, "my free and independent life. If I chose to follow the example of my brethren I might go and eat every day at the houses of people of rank ; but besides that the love of my work frequently keeps me at home, I am a little Aristippos ; I am equally at ease in high society and in retirement, in abundance and in frugality."

The wine was so good that a second bottle had to be produced from the cupboard. Toward the end of the repast,¹ I gave him to

¹ In the original *entre la poire et le fromage*, literally "between the pear and the cheese."

understand that I should like to hear some of his compositions; and he at once looked out a sonnet from among his papers, which he read to me with emphasis. Yet, in spite of the charm of his delivery, I thought it so obscure that I could make nothing of it. He perceived this. "This sonnet," he said, "does not seem very clear to you, does it?" I confessed that I should have liked a little more plainness. He began to laugh at me. "If this sonnet, friend, is hardly intelligible," he replied, "so much the better. Sonnets, odes, and other compositions, aiming at the sublime, are not compatible with the simple and natural. It is their obscurity which constitutes their whole merit.¹ It is enough if the poet believes that he understands himself." "You are jesting," I interrupted; "common sense and clearness are essential to all kinds of poetry; and if your incomparable Gongora does not write more intelligibly than you, I confess that I cannot think very highly of him. Such poets can at most only deceive their own generation. Now let us hear your prose."

Nunez showed me a preface which he said

¹ At the end of the *Mémoires curieux envoyez de Madrid, Paris, 1670*, there is a *Dissertation sur le génie des Espagnols pour les lettres*, etc., in which Quevedo, Gongora, and Villemédiana are mentioned as wishing to rise out of the common, and trying to elevate their style, but then "they fall immediately either in extravagance, or in obscurity, and are so much the more esteemed in Spain as they are less intelligible."

he intended to prefix to a dramatic miscellany, which he had in the press. Then he asked me what I thought of it. "I like your prose no better than I do your verse," I said. "Your sonnet is but high-sounding fustian; and as for your preface, it is full of far-fetched expressions, of words which are not cast in the public mint, of involved phrases, as it were—in a word, your style is eccentric. The books of our best and oldest authors are written in a very different manner." "Poor ignoramus!" cried Fabricio; "you are not aware that every prose-writer in the present day who covets the reputation of a refined author affects this eccentricity of style, these recondite expressions which shock you. There are five or six of us, bold innovators who have undertaken to change the language completely; and we shall succeed, please God, in spite of Lope de Vega, Cervantes, and all the other geniuses who cavil at our new fashions of speech.¹ We are backed by a number of distinguished partisans; we have even theologians on our side."²

¹ This may have applied to Spain, at the time of Gongora; but Lesage evidently wished to satirise such authors as Houdar de La Motte and Fontenelle, who were accused of corrupting the style and of using neologisms.

² By the "theologians" Lesage is said to have meant Berruyer, a Jesuit (1681-1758), whose *History of God's People* and *History of the New Testament* are written in such a ridiculous style that they had to be suppressed; the Abbé Houtteville (1686-1742), who wrote *The Truth of the Christian Religion*, and some other clergymen.

“After all,” he continued, “our design is commendable; and, prejudice apart, we have far more merit than these natural writers who speak like ordinary men. I cannot conceive why so many worthy people esteem them. That was well enough at Athens and Rome, where one man was as good as another; and this is why Socrates said to Alcibiades that the people were excellent teachers of language. But at Madrid there is a right and a wrong way of speaking, and our courtiers express themselves quite differently from our citizens. You may take my word for it; and, to be brief, our new style excels that of our opponents. I will show you by a single example the difference between our polished diction and their platitudes. They would say, for instance, quite plainly, ‘Intermezzos embellish a comedy,’ whereas we should say, more ornately, ‘Intermezzos create beauty in a comedy.’ Observe this ‘create beauty.’¹ Do you see all its brilliancy, its delicacy, its prettiness?”

I interrupted my innovator with a burst of laughter. “Get along with you, Fabricio,” I cried, “you are quite a character with your affected language.” “And you,” he rejoined, “you are no better than a simpleton with your natural style. Go,” he continued, applying to me the words of the Archbishop of Grenada, “go and tell my treasurer to give

¹ See INTRODUCTORY NOTICE, Vol. i., page xvi.

you a hundred ducats, and Heaven be your guide with that sum. Farewell, Master Gil Blas; I wish you a little more taste." I roared out still louder at this sally; and Fabricio, pardoning me for having spoken irreverently of his writings, lost none of his good humour. We finished our second bottle, after which we both rose from the table in pretty good trim. We went out intending to take a walk on the Prado; but, passing the door of a liquor-shop, we took it into our heads to enter.

Generally the company was pretty select in this place. In two distinct apartments I saw gentlemen amusing themselves in different fashions. In one they were playing at primero and at chess, and in the other ten or twelve individuals were attentively listening to the arguments of two professional wits. There was no need to approach them to discover that a metaphysical proposition was the subject under discussion, for they spoke so warmly and passionately that they both looked as if they were possessed. I fancy that if Eleazar's ring had been put on their nose, you would have seen evil spirits fly out of their nostrils."¹ "Why, good Heaven!" I

¹ Eleazar, a famous magician, who cast out devils by affixing to the nose of the possessed a certain mystical ring, which the demon no sooner smelled than he abandoned the patient. In performing before the Emperor Vespasian, he commanded the demon in going away to upset a pitcher of water: a command which the demon immediately complied with.

said to my companion, "what passion! what lungs! These disputants were born to be town-criers. Most men do not fill their natural calling." "Very true, indeed," he rejoined; "these fellows belong apparently to the race of Novius, the Roman banker, whose voice rose above the din of the charioteers.¹ But," he added, "what would most annoy me in listening to them is that our ears would be deafened to no purpose." We left these vociferous metaphysicians to themselves, and I thereby escaped a headache which was just coming on. We seated ourselves in a corner of the other room, whence, over our cooling drinks, we began to criticise those persons who came in and went out, for Nunez knew them nearly all. "By Heaven!" he cried, "the discussion of our philosophers will not be over in a hurry: here are fresh reinforcements arriving. These three men, who are coming in, mean to join the party. But do you see those two queer fellows just going out? That wizened, little, swarthy man, whose smooth, straight hair is as long in front as behind, is Don Julian de Villanuno. He is a young *oydor*, who sets up for a beau. A friend of mine and I went to dine with him the other day and we caught him in a rather odd occupation. He was amusing

¹ Novius, from being a slave, came to be a rich citizen of Rome, and turned usurer. Horace alludes to the loudness of his voice in the sixth Satire of his First Book.

himself in his study by throwing about the bags of a lawsuit on which he has to make a report, and which a large greyhound fetched back to him, and tore finely. That licentiate with the rubicund face, who accompanies him, is Don Cherubin Tonto,¹ a canon of the church at Toledo, the greatest idiot in the world; though, from his smiling and intellectual appearance, you would think he had plenty of wit. He has bright eyes, and an arch, malicious smile, so that anyone would say his mind was occupied by refined thoughts. If a work of genius is read in his presence, he listens with an attention which you might imagine to be full of intelligence, and yet he understands nothing about it. He was at the *oydor's* dinner. There were a thousand smart things said, and a great number of witticisms uttered. Don Cherubin never spoke; but he showed his approval by gestures and demonstrations, which seemed superior to the very sallies uttered by the rest of us."

"Do you know those two ill-kempt fellows," I said to Nunez, "who are talking in that corner in a low voice, with their elbows on the table, whiffing their breath into each other's faces?" "No," he replied; "their countenances are unknown to me. But they are apparently coffee-house politicians,² finding fault with the

¹ *Tonto* is the Spanish for "fatuous."

At the time *Gil Blas* was supposed to have lived there existed

government. Look at that spruce gentleman, who whistles as he paces up and down the room, and rests now on one foot, now on another. That is Don Augustin Moreto,¹ a young poet not without talent, but whose brain is almost turned by flatterers and fools. The man you see him talking to is one of his colleagues, who writes prosy rhymes, and is also moon-struck. More authors still," he exclaimed, pointing out two gentlemen who came in, wearing swords. "One would think they had passed round the word to come and be reviewed by you. These are Don Bernard Deslenguado and Don Sebastian de Villaviciosa. The first is a very splenetic genius, an author, born under the planet Saturn, a malevolent creature whose pleasure it is to hate everybody, and who is loved by none. As for Don Sebastian, he is an honest young fellow, an author who does not wish to have anything on his conscience. A little time ago he brought out a comedy which was remarkably successful, and he has had it published, in order that the public may no longer be deluded in their estimation."²

no coffee-houses either in France or Spain, for coffee was only introduced into Europe in the seventeenth century, and more than a hundred years after our hero's adventures.

¹ Don Augustin Moreto, a Spanish author, whose first works were published in 1654, and who retired to a religious house at Toledo in 1657, where he died twelve years later. Lesage has borrowed a good deal from him.

² It is impossible to say whom Lesage may have meant by all

Gongora's charitable pupil was continuing his explanation of the moving picture which we had before our eyes, when an attendant of the Duke of Medina Sidonia came up and said — "Don Fabricio, I have been looking for you to tell you that my lord duke wishes to speak to you. He is waiting for you in his palace." Nunez, who knew that a great nobleman's wishes cannot be too quickly gratified, quitted me at once to wait upon his Mæcenæ, leaving me much astonished at hearing him addressed as "don," and discovering that he had thus become ennobled, in spite of his father, Master Chrysostom, the barber.

CHAPTER XIV.

FABRICIO FINDS A SITUATION FOR GIL BLAS WITH
COUNT GALIANO, A SICILIAN NOBLEMAN.

I WAS too anxious to see Fabricio again, not to visit his lodgings early next morning. "Good day to you, my worthy Don Fabricio, the flower, or rather the mushroom of the Asturian nobility," I said as I entered. He began to laugh at this. "You observed then," he

these authors, but *Deslenguado* is the Spanish for "loquacious, foul-mouthed."

replied, "that they addressed me as 'don?'" "Yes, honourable sir," I answered; "and you will permit me to say that yesterday, when you were recounting to me your transformations, you forgot the best of them." "So I did," he resumed, "but the fact is that, if I took this title of honour it was less to gratify my vanity than to accommodate myself to that of others. You know what Spaniards are. They think nothing of a worthy man if he has the misfortune to lack wealth and birth. Moreover, let me tell you, that I see so many people, and Heaven knows what sort of people, who are called Don Francisco, Don Gabriel, Don Pedro, or Don What-do-you-call-him, that you must allow nobility to be very common indeed, so that a plebeian who has some talent confers on it an honour when he consents to join its ranks."

"But let us change the subject," he continued. "Last night, at the Duke of Medina Sidonia's supper, among other company, there was Count Galiano, a Sicilian nobleman of the first rank. The conversation turned upon the ridiculous effects of self-esteem; and delighted to have some subject wherewith to entertain the company, I treated them to the history of the sermons. You can imagine how they laughed at it, and that your archbishop caught it finely; but it did not produce a bad result, for they pitied you; and Count Galiano, after

putting many questions to me concerning you, to which you may be sure I made proper replies, desired me to take you to his house. I was just about to look for you for that purpose. In all probability he means to offer you to be one of his secretaries, and I should not advise you to refuse the situation. You will be capitally treated at this nobleman's; he is rich, and lives in Madrid like an ambassador. It is said that he has come to court to confer with the Duke of Lerma, concerning some crown demesnes in Sicily which the minister intends to sell. In a word, Count Galiano, though a Sicilian, appears to be generous, upright, and frank; and you could not do better than attach yourself to him. Perhaps it is he who is to make you rich, according to what was foretold you at Grenada."

"I was determined," I said to Nunez, "to gad about a little, and amuse myself, before going back into service; but you describe to me the Sicilian nobleman in such a manner that it has made me alter my mind. I wish I were already with him." "You soon shall be," he replied, "or I am much mistaken." We immediately sallied forth together to the Count's, who occupied the house of his friend Don Sancho d'Avila, then in the country.

The courtyard was crowded with a throng of pages and lackeys, in rich and elegant liveries, and in the antechamber a number of ushers,

gentlemen-in-waiting, and other officers of the household, all splendidly dressed, but their features were so whimsical that I took them for a troop of apes, attired in Spanish garb. It must be confessed that there are some men's and women's faces for whom art can do nothing.

Don Fabricio was announced, and he was almost at once shown into the room, whither I followed him. The Count, in his dressing-gown, was seated on a sofa, taking his chocolate. We made our obeisance with every mark of deep respect; he, on his side, inclined his head, and looked so bewitchingly that he won my heart at once. It is very wonderful, and yet very common what an effect is produced on us by a favourable reception from the great! They must receive us very badly indeed to displease us.

This nobleman, after he had taken his chocolate, amused himself for some time by playing with a large ape which sat at his side, and went by the name of Cupid. I cannot say why the name of this god had been given to the animal, unless it was because it possessed the same amount of mischief; for it certainly resembled him in no other respect. Nevertheless, such as it was, it was the darling of its master, who was so charmed by its pretty tricks that he always had it in his arms. Nunez and I, though not much diverted by the ape's gambols, pretended to be delighted

by them. This greatly pleased the Sicilian, who tore himself away from his favourable occupation, to say to me—"My friend, if you like, you shall be one of my secretaries. If the situation suits you, your salary will be two hundred pistoles a year. It is enough that Don Fabricio has introduced you and answers for you." "Yes, my lord," cried Nunez, "I am bolder than Plato, who dared not answer for one of his friends whom he sent to Dionysius the Tyrant.¹ I have no fear of incurring reproaches."

I thanked the poet of the Asturias with a low bow for his obliging boldness, and addressing my patron, assured the latter of my zeal and fidelity. The nobleman no sooner saw that his proposal was accepted than he sent for his master of the household, to whom he spoke in a low voice. Then he said to me—"Gil Blas, I will presently explain to you how I intend to employ you. Meanwhile you need only follow my man of business: he has orders concerning you." I obeyed, leaving Fabricio with the Count and Cupid.

The master of the household, a cunning native of Messina, led the way to his own room, overwhelming me all the while with

¹ Fabricio always quotes like a scholar. The first time he meets Gil Blas he encourages him by a phrase from Cicero (See vol. i., book i., ch. 17, p. 109). In the thirteenth chapter of vol. ii., p. 403, he refers to Novius, and here he brings Plato in to recommend his friend.

civilities. He sent for the tailor, who clothed the whole household, and bade him quickly make me a suit of the same magnificence as those of the principal officers. The tailor took my measure and departed. "As for your quarters," said the Calabrian, "I know a room which will just suit you. But have you breakfasted?" asked he. I answered in the negative. "Ah, poor fellow!" he replied, "why did you not say so? This is a house in which you have only to speak when you want anything. Come this way, I will take you to a place where, thank Heaven, there is no lack of anything."

So saying, he led me down to the buttery, where we found the butler, a Neapolitan, and therefore a match for a native of Messina. The steward and he were certainly a well-matched pair.¹ This worthy butler and five or six of his friends were cramming themselves with ham, tongue, and other savoury meats, which obliged them to drink continually. We joined these merry fellows, and helped them in their attacks upon the count's best wines. Whilst this was going on in the buttery, kindred exploits were performed in the kitchen. There the cook was regaling three or four tradesmen of his acquaintance, who spared the wine no more

¹ The original has *Jean danse mieux que Pierre, Pierre danse mieux que Jean*; literally, "John dances better than Peter, Peter dances better than John."

than we did, and who were stuffing themselves with rabbit and partridge pies. The very scullions took their fill of whatever they could lay their hands on. I fancied myself in a house abandoned to pillage; but this was nothing; I saw but trifles compared with what I did not see.

CHAPTER XV.

GIL BLAS IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF COUNT GALIANO'S HOUSEHOLD.

I WENT out for my luggage, and had it brought to my new residence. When I returned the count was at dinner with several noblemen, and the poet Nunez, who was calling for what he wanted, and mingling in the conversation, with perfect freedom. Indeed, I observed that every word he spoke entertained the company. There is nothing like intelligence! When you possess that you can play any character you choose.

It was my lot to dine with the gentlemen of the household, who were treated much the same as their master. After the meal I retired to my room, where I began to muse on my lot. "Well, Gil Blas," I soliloquised, "here you

are in the service of a Sicilian count of whose character you know nothing! Judging by appearances, you will be as much in your element in his house as is a fish in the water. But we cannot be sure of anything, and you have reason to mistrust your star, whose evil influence you have but too often experienced. Moreover, you do not know for what employment he destines you. He has secretaries and a steward: what services, then, does he expect from you? Apparently he intends to make you his love messenger. Very well! No man can be on a better footing in a nobleman's house if he wishes rapidly to make his fortune. By the most honourable services he only will get on step by step, and even then he does not always gain his end."

Whilst I was turning over these fine reflections in my mind, a servant came to tell me that all the gentlemen who had been dining had just left, and that the count was asking for me. I hastened instantly to his room, where I found him lying on the sofa, and about to take his *siesta*, with his ape by his side.

"Come nearer, Gil Blas," he said; "take a seat and listen to me." I did as I was bid, and he spoke as follows—"Don Fabricio has told me that among other good qualities you have that of devoting yourself to your masters, and that you are a very honest young man. These two things induced me to offer you to enter

my service. I want a person in my house who is attached to me, who will make my interests his own, and give his whole attention to looking after my property. I am rich, it is true; but every year my expenditure far exceeds my income. And why is this? Because I am robbed and ransacked. I am in my house as in a wood full of robbers. I suspect my butler and my head-steward of playing into one another's hands; and, if I am not deceived, this is more than enough to ruin me completely. You will tell me that if I believe them to be rogues I need only dismiss them. But where shall I find others cast in a different mould? I must, therefore, be content to have them overlooked by some man invested with the right of controlling their conduct, and I have chosen you, Gil Blas, to perform this service. If you discharge it well, be sure you will not be serving an ungrateful man; I will make it my business to provide handsomely for you in Sicily."

After this, he sent me away; and that very evening, in presence of all the servants, I was proclaimed superintendent of the household. The gentleman from Messina and the Neapolitan were not in the first instance greatly mortified by this, because they thought me a fellow very easy to deal with, and they took it for granted that, by sharing the spoil with me, they could go on in their old course. But

they looked very foolish on the following day, when I distinctly told them I was decidedly opposed to every kind of peculation. I required from the butler an account of all the provisions in store; I went down into the cellars; and even took an inventory of everything that was in the pantry, such as plate and linen. I then warned them both to be careful of their master's property, to be economical in their expenditure, and finished my lecture by declaring that I should inform his lordship of any irregularities which I might perceive in his house.

I did not stop here. I needed a spy to discover if there was any private understanding between them. I cast my eyes on a scullion who, won over by my promises, told me that I could not have done better than apply to him to be informed of all that was going on in the house; that the butler and the head steward were in a league, and burned the candle at both ends; that every day they appropriated half the supplies which were bought for the household; that the Neapolitan had under his protection a lady residing opposite St Thomas's College, and that the native from Messina kept another at the Sun-Gate; that both these gentlemen sent all kinds of provisions to their ladies every morning; that the cook, on his part, sent some nice dishes to a widow of his acquaintance in the neighbourhood; and that, in return for the

services he rendered to the other two, to whom he was devoted, he had the same access to the cellar as themselves; in short, that these three servants were the cause of a most horrible system of extravagance in the count's household. "If you doubt my information," added the scullion, "take the trouble of going to-morrow morning to St Thomas's College, about seven o'clock, and you will see me carrying a basket, which will change your doubt into certainty." "So you are the messenger of these gallant purveyors," said I. "I am employed," he replied, "by the butler; and one of my fellow-servants performs messages for the steward."

This report seemed worth the trouble of verifying. I was curious enough to go next morning to St Thomas's College at the appointed hour; and I had not long to wait for my spy. I soon saw him approaching with a large basket crammed full of butcher's meat, poultry, and game. I made a list of the articles, and wrote down in my pocket-book a formal entry, for the purpose of showing it to my master, after telling the scullion to carry out his commission as usual.

The Sicilian nobleman, who had a very quick temper, resolved, in the first moments of his rage, to pack off, on the spot, the gentlemen from Naples and Messina; but having reflected a little, he was content with getting rid of the

latter, whose post he made over to me. Thus my office of superintendent was suppressed very shortly after its creation, and, to be frank, I did not regret it. It was really nothing better than a superior kind of detective's work, and there was nothing substantial in the nature of the appointment, whereas, by being steward, I became master of the strong box, and that is everything. It is always the steward who ranks highest in a great house ; and there are so many little perquisites attached to his administration that he inevitably grows rich, even if he be an honest man.

My Neapolitan, who was not yet at his wit's end, observing my fierce zeal, and that I got up every morning to see what provisions he bought, and to keep an account of them, ceased to appropriate them ; but the rascal continued every day to purchase the same quantity as before. This stratagem increased the profit which he drew from what was left of the meals, which was his perquisite ; and thus he contrived to send, at all events, ready dressed victuals to his charmer, if he could not supply her with them uncooked. After all, the devil got his due, and the count was little the better for his paragon of a steward. I observed that our meals were now served in a most lavish manner ; this made me guess the new trick, and I soon reduced things to order by cutting down what was unnecessary in every course. This,

however, I did so judiciously that there was no appearance of parsimony. Any one would have thought that there was always the same profusion; and yet, by this economy, I considerably reduced the expenses. This was just what my employer wanted; he desired to retrench without appearing less munificent; for his thrift was subordinate to his love of ostentation.

This was not all; I reformed another abuse. Finding the wine disappear very quickly, I suspected that there was still some trickery going on. If, for example, there were a dozen gentlemen or so at my lord's table, fifty, and sometimes even sixty bottles were emptied. This surprised me; and I consulted my oracle, that is to say, my scullion, with whom I had secret interviews, and who faithfully told me all that was said and done in the kitchen, where they had not the least suspicion of him. He informed me that the waste of which I complained, arose from a fresh conspiracy between the butler, the cook, and the servants who poured out the wine; and that the last carried off the bottles half-full, which they afterwards shared with their confederates. I spoke to the footmen, threatened to discharge them if they dared to do the like again; and this was sufficient to recall them to their duty. My master, whom I took care to keep informed of the slightest things I did on his behalf, over-

whelmed me with praise, and liked me better every day ; and I, in order to reward the scullion who had done me such good service, appointed him an assistant-cook. Thus it is that a faithful servant makes his way in a first-rate household.

The Neapolitan was furious at finding me in his way in every direction ; and what chiefly mortified him was the examination he had to undergo, whenever he brought me his accounts ; for, the better to clip his wings, I took the trouble to go regularly to market in order to learn the price of the different articles, so that, after this, I knew what he was up to, and whenever he attempted to impose upon me,¹ I reprimanded him smartly. I was quite certain that he cursed me a hundred times a day ; but knowing the cause of his curses, I had no fear of their being heard. I am astonished he could endure my persecutions without quitting the service of the Sicilian nobleman ; but, no doubt, in spite of everything, he made it pay somehow.

Fabricio, whom I occasionally saw, and to whom I told all my unprecedented exploits of stewardship, was more disposed to blame my conduct than to approve it. “Heaven grant,” he said to me one day, “that your disinterestedness may be rewarded, after all. But between

¹ In French, *il ne manquait pas de vouloir ferrer la mule*, he did not fail to wish and shoe the mule.

ourselves, if you were not so exacting with the butler, I fancy you would fare none the worse." "What!" I answered him, "shall this robber charge, with a brazen face, ten pistoles for a fish that only costs him four; and would you have me blink at that?" "Why not?" he replied coolly, "he need only give you half the difference, and he will be doing things according to rule. Upon my word, my friend," he continued, shaking his head, "for a man of intelligence you manage things very badly. You are a regular marplot, and you are likely to be in service for a long time, since you let the eel slip through your fingers without skinning it.¹ Know that fortune is like one of those flighty and not too straight-laced coquettes, who slip out of the hands of the gallants who stand upon ceremony with them."

I only laughed at Nunez's speech; he laughed at it himself, and would have persuaded me that he only spoke in jest. He was ashamed of having given me bad advice to no purpose. I continued firm in my resolution to be ever faithful and zealous. I kept to my resolve; and I will make bold to say that within four months I saved my master, by my economy, at least three thousand ducats.

¹ In French, *puisque vous n'écorchez pas l'anguille pendant que vous la tenez*; Lesage's way of expressing, "to neglect to make hay whilst the sun shines."

CHAPTER XVI.

OF THE ACCIDENT WHICH HAPPENED TO COUNT GALIANO'S APE ; THAT NOBLEMAN'S AFFLICTION ON THAT OCCASION. HOW GIL BLAS FELL ILL ; AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS MALADY.

AT the end of this time the quiet of our household was strangely disturbed by an accident which may seem a mere trifle to the reader, but which was yet a very serious matter for the servants, and for myself in particular. Cupid, the ape, which I have already mentioned, that animal so beloved by its master, trying one day to leap from one window to another, jumped so badly that it fell into the courtyard, and put one of its legs out of joint. No sooner was the count informed of this misfortune than he began to scream like a woman; and in the excess of his grief, blaming all his attendants without exception, well nigh cleared his house of us. But he limited his rage to cursing our negligence, and by addressing us without picking his words. All the surgeons in Madrid who were most skilful in fractures and dislocations were instantly sent for. They attended to the injured creature's leg, set and bandaged it, but, though they all declared that there was no danger, this did not prevent

my master from keeping one of them at the animal's side until it had completely recovered.

I should do wrong to pass over in silence the pangs and anxieties which the Sicilian nobleman suffered during this period. Will it be believed that he never left his darling Cupid throughout the day? The leg was never dressed but in his presence, and he got up two or three times in the night to look at the patient. The most annoying thing was that all his servants, and myself in particular, were constantly kept on the alert to be ready to run whithersoever he thought proper to send us in the ape's service. In short, we had no rest in the house, until the cursed brute having recovered from the effects of its fall, resumed its ordinary capers and antics. After this shall we refuse to believe the assertion of Suetonius, when he tells us that Caligula was so fond of his horse that he provided for it a richly furnished house, with attendants to wait on it, and that he was even anxious to make it consul? Our master was no less charmed with his ape; he would gladly have made it corregidor.

My greatest misfortune was that I had surpassed in zeal all the other servants, in order the better to pay my court to his lordship, and had exerted myself so much on Cupid's behalf, that I fell ill. I was attacked by a violent fever, and became so bad that I lost

consciousness. I do not know what was done with me during the fortnight that I lay between life and death ; I only know that my youth struggled so successfully against the fever, and perhaps against the remedies which had been given to me, that at length I came again to my senses. The first use I made of them was to observe that I was not in my own room. I wished to know the reason of this, and asked an old woman who was attending me ; but she told me that I must not talk, for the doctor had expressly forbidden it. When we are well we generally laugh at physicians ; but when we are ill we tamely submit to their directions.

I, therefore, resolved to hold my tongue, though I was very anxious to converse with my nurse. I was debating the subject in my own mind, when there came in two very spruce, foppish-looking fellows, in velvet clothes, with very fine linen trimmed with lace. I fancied they were men of rank and friends of my master, who, out of consideration for him, had come to see me. Under this impression I did my best to sit up ; and I took off my night-cap out of respect for them ; but my nurse forced me again under the bedclothes, and told me that these gentlemen were my physician and apothecary.

The doctor came up to my bedside, felt my pulse, looked at my face, and discovering all the signs of speedy recovery, assumed a triumphant

manner, as though he had a good deal to do with it, and said that only one more dose of medicine was needed to complete his task, after which he might boast of having performed a fine cure. After expressing himself thus, he dictated to the apothecary a prescription, looking all the time in the glass, arranging his hair, and making faces, at which I could not help laughing, in spite of the condition I was in. Then he nodded to me very slightly, and went his way, more taken up with his appearance than with the drugs he had ordered me.

After his departure the apothecary, who had not come to me for nothing, made ready to . . . it may easily be supposed what to do. Whether he was afraid that the old woman's skill was not equal to the occasion, or whether it was to set a higher value on his wares, he chose to operate himself; but with all his skill, I do not know how it happened, the operation was scarcely over when, restoring to the practitioner all what he had given me, I made his velvet suit in a nice mess. He looked upon this accident as one of the evils attached to the pharmaceutical profession. He took a napkin, dried himself without saying a word, and went away, with the full intention of making me pay the cleaner, to whom he was unquestionably obliged to send his clothes.

He returned next morning, more modestly dressed, though there was no risk to run this

time, in order to bring me the potion which the physician had prescribed the night before. I not only felt myself getting better every moment, but I had taken such a dislike, since the preceding day, to physicians and apothecaries, that I cursed even the universities where these gentlemen receive permission to kill men with impunity. In this frame of mind, I declared with an oath that I would have no more medicine, and that Hippocrates and his followers might go to the deuce. The apothecary, who cared nothing for what I did with his potion, so long as he was paid for it, left it on the table, and went off without saying one syllable.

I immediately ordered that villainous mixture to be thrown out of the window, being so prejudiced against it that I should have thought myself poisoned if I had swallowed it. To this act of disobedience I added another ; I broke silence, and firmly told my nurse that I absolutely insisted on knowing what had become of my master. The old woman, who did not like to gratify my curiosity, for fear of exciting my feelings and of upsetting me, or who perhaps also showed her obstinacy only in order to aggravate my illness, hesitated to speak ; but I urged her so strongly to obey me that she at last replied—" Worthy sir, you have no longer any master but yourself. Count Galiano has returned to Sicily."

I could not believe what I heard ; and yet nothing was more true. On the second day of my illness, his lordship, fearing that I should die in his house, had been kind enough to order me to be removed with my few effects to a furnished room, where he had unceremoniously abandoned me to Providence, and the care of a nurse. Meanwhile, having received an order from the Court compelling him to go back to Sicily, he left in such haste that he had thought no more about me. Either he reckoned that I was already dead, or else persons of rank are subject to such lapses of memory.

My nurse gave me these particulars, and also informed me that it was she who had sent for a physician and an apothecary that I might not die without their assistance. I fell into profound thought at this nice piece of news. Farewell my handsome settlement in Sicily ! Farewell my most sanguine hopes ! “ When any great misfortune happens to you,” says a certain Pope, “ examine your conduct well, and you will see that it is always in some measure your own fault.” With all deference to the Holy Father, I do not see how I contributed to my misfortune in this instance.

When the flattering fancies with which I had filled my head were all vanishing, the first thing I troubled myself about was my

trunk, which I bade my nurse bring to my bedside in order to examine it. I sighed on discovering that it had been opened. "Alas! my dear trunk," I exclaimed, "my only consolation! It seems you too have been at the mercy of strangers." "No, no, Señor Gil Blas," the old woman said to me, "make yourself easy on that score; you have not been robbed of anything; I have guarded your trunk as carefully as my own honour."

I found in it the suit which I had worn when I entered the count's service; but I looked in vain for that which my friend from Messina had had made for me. Either my master had not thought fit to leave it to me, or else some one had appropriated it. All my other property was safe, and even a large leather purse in which I kept my money. I counted it twice, not being able to believe at first that there were only fifty pistoles left out of the two hundred and sixty which it had contained before I fell ill. "What is the meaning of this, my good woman?" I said to my nurse. "My money here is much diminished." "Any way no one has touched it but myself," the old woman replied, "and I have been as careful as possible. But illness is very expensive; one is always laying out money. Here," added this careful housekeeper, taking a bundle of papers out of her pocket, "here is a statement of expenses, as true as gold, which will show you I have not used a stiver amiss."

I ran my eyes over the bill, which extended to fifteen or twenty sheets. Mercy on me! How much poultry had been bought whilst I was unconscious! For soups alone there must at least have been used for a dozen pistoles. The other entries were in keeping with this. It cannot be imagined how much had been spent in firing, candles, water, brooms, and the like. Nevertheless, swollen as her accounts were, the whole sum hardly reached thirty pistoles, and consequently there was still a deficiency of one hundred and eighty. I pointed this out to her; but the old woman, with apparent candour, began to call all the saints to bear witness that there were no more than eighty pistoles in the purse when the count's butler had given my trunk in her charge. "What do you say, my good woman?" I hastily interrupted her: "was it the butler who placed my effects in your hands?" "Certainly it was," she replied; "and more by token, he said to me when he brought them: 'Here, good mother; when Señor Gil Blas shall be done for,¹ do not fail to treat him to a decent funeral; there is money enough in this trunk to cover the expense.'"

"Oh cursed Neapolitan!" I exclaimed, "I am

¹ In the original, *quand le seigneur Gil Blas sera frit à l'huile*, when M. Gil Blas will be fried in oil, because in Roman Catholic countries sacred oil is applied to the head, the hands, and the feet of dying people.

no longer at a loss to know what has become of the money that is lacking. You have filched it to make up for part of the thefts which I hindered you from committing." After this exclamation I thanked Heaven that the rascal had not made off with the whole. Yet whatever reason I had for accusing the butler of having robbed me, I still thought that my nurse might possibly be the thief. My suspicions fell sometimes on one, sometimes on the other; but it was all the same to me. I said nothing about the matter to the old woman, and did not even cavil at the items in her pretty bill; I should have gained nothing by this; everyone must live by his trade. The utmost of my resentment was to pay her and to dismiss her three days later.

I fancy that when she left me she went and told the apothecary that she just had taken her departure, and that I was well enough to decamp without settling with him; for, a moment later, I saw him come in, quite out of breath. He gave me his bill, in which, under names that were unknown to me though I had been a physician, he had put down all the remedies which he pretended to have supplied whilst I was unconscious. This bill might truly be called a regular doctor's bill. So we had a quarrel when it came to paying. I insisted on his abating one-half of the sum he asked; he swore he would not take one far-

thing less. But considering that he had to do with a young man who might leave Madrid that very day, he chose to content himself with what I offered him (which was three times more than what his drugs were worth), rather than run the risk of losing all. I counted out to him the money with infinite regret, and he retired well avenged for the annoyance I had caused him on the day of the enema.

The physician appeared almost immediately afterwards: for these creatures are always at each other's heels. I paid him for his visits, which had been very frequent, and sent him away well pleased. But, before leaving me, to prove that he had fairly earned his money, he enumerated the fatal circumstances which he had prevented during my illness. He did this very learnedly and pleasantly; but I understood nothing of what was said. When I had got rid of him, I thought I was quit of all the ministers of the Fates; but I was deceived. A surgeon came in whom I had never seen in my life. He saluted me very politely, and told me how pleased he was to see that I had escaped the danger through which I had passed. This, he said, he attributed to two copious blood-lettings which he had performed, and to the cuppings which he had had the honour of applying. This was another feather out of my wing; I was obliged to pay tribute to the

surgeon also.¹ After so many evacuations my purse was brought to such a state of debility that it might be described as a lifeless body; it retained so little of its essential principle.

I began to lose courage when I found myself thus relapsing into misery. In the service of my two last masters I had become too much attached to the comforts of life; I could no longer face poverty, as of old, like a cynic. It must be owned, however, that I was wrong to give way to melancholy. After so often experiencing that fortune had no sooner cast me down than she raised me up again, I ought merely to have regarded my sad condition as a harbinger of speedy prosperity.

¹ In the original, *cracher au bassin*, literally, "to expectorate in the basin."

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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